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HISTORICAL COMPOSITIONS IN THE RGVEDA A CRITICAL EXPOSITION



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Certificate

I certify that this thesis "**HISTORICAL COMPOSITIONS IN THE RGVEDA - A CRITICAL EXPOSITION**" presented by Shri. Narasimha S. Bhat represents his original work and has not been submitted for any other Diploma or Degree in any University. The work has been carried out by him, in the Department of Sanskrit, Karnatak University, Dharwad, under my guidance and supervision.

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Preface

It is the Universal truth that the Vedas, besides their having religio-philosophical importance, unfold the basic elements of various branches of Social Science and Physical Science. In this respect, the *Rgveda* has been widely regarded as an authoritative text on various philosophical and historical issues. No doubt, the traditional scholars, having found out the philosophical importance of the *Rgveda*, had written significant commentaries which are still available in the Oriental Libraries. So also, the scholars, eastern as well as western, have discovered historical elements in it. But there has been an unreconcileable gap between the views of scolars of these two groups.

At this juncture, I would like to express that I have made an humble attempt in thesis to reconciled both the views restoring the traditional importance of the *Rgveda*. In this way, the thesis marks a study of Rgvedic hymns in their socio-philosophical and historical perspective. Further, it is necessary to make it clear that the phrase "*historical compositions in the Rgveda*" of the title of the thesis, may give rise to the wrong notion of the Vedas as being composed, which however is not accepted by the traditional scholars. But it is not so. The word 'composition' is used here in the sense of " systematic arrangement of various elements together in a composite form."*

The task of writing such a research work was made by the inspiring guidance of my revered teacher and Research Guide Dr. K.B.Archak, Reader, Department of Sanskrit, Karnatak University Dharwad. Therefore, I feel myself proud to extend my deep and respectful sense of gratitude to him.

I further offer my heartfelt thanks to my respected parrents and sisters for their help and co-operation throughout my Ph.D. course.

* See. Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary,(Fifth Edn.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, p-234.

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CHAPTER - I

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF VEDIC LITERATURE

Indian culture is original and creative. It is a very old culture. In ordinary language, no distinction is made between culture and civilization. The culture and civilization are used for each other. However, a peep into deeper meaning of these two terms convey that there is a narrow distinction between them. It is in this connection said : "In the literal sense, the term culture means cultivation and refers to the cultivation of mind and spirit. Culture may be defined as that refinement of the mind and intelligence which enables an individual to appreciate all that is good, true and beautiful in life. Culture is the sum-total of all those qualities which make a person gentleman." And, "civilization refers to the material progress of man. It is concerned with the methods by which human society has progressed from the primitive conditions to the present advancement. It shows as to how man has established his control over nature and added to the happiness and prosperity of humanity."¹ Another feature of the Indian culture is that it is a living culture for welfare and not a meaningless culture. Glimpses of

1. V.D. Mahajan : *Political and Cultural History of Ancient India*, G.S. Sharma for S.Chand and Co., Ram Nagar, New Delhi, 1962, pp-1-2.



living examples of Indian culture can be seen in every walk of life of human beings even during the modern times.

The important sources of ancient Indian history and culture are literature, archeology, foreign accounts and tribal legends. Ancient Indian literature is so varied and rich in many respects, that it is difficult to exhaust even this source. Ancient Indian literature is partly sacred and partly secular; that is, the Vedic literature is the main source of all subsequent cultural manifestations in India. Since the time immemorial, scholars, poets, philosophers and historians have declared with one voice that the Vedas are the main source of all cultural manifestations in India. The concepts of *Rta*, *Brahman*, the *Puruṣārtha*, the spirit of sacrifice and service, the noble aspirations of political and social harmony and co-operation as well as the enlightening principles of art and science these and other fundamentals of the Indian culture or **Hindu Dharma** were formulated by the Vedic *Rsis* and assiduously developed by succeeding generations of thinkers and scholars. Thus, the Indian culture has gathered, through the ages, its richness and strength from several diverse sources ; but its main fountain is the Vedic canon.

Recently, however, this fact has been challenged by some western scholars and their Indian followers who take up the study of Vedic culture with a set of facile assumption and hypotheses furnished by Archaeology, Philology, Anthropology and comparative Mythology, all of which are, by their very nature, rather speculative than definitive. The earliest literature of India is purely of a religious kind. The patience and industry of a multitude of scholars have, however, succeeded in extracting from its useful bits of history.



At this juncture, one should know flawless definition of the Veda. To begin with, the term Veda means knowledge derived from the root 'Vid' (to know). Also the term Veda denotes the texts containing the most sacred and authoritative knowledge, the texts whose authority can never be questioned, and which are the last tribunal in matters of dispute whether in religion or philosophy or social customs.

The Vedic literature may be divided into three great divisions, the *mantras* or *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Sūtras*. The *mantras*² and the *Brāhmaṇas* are called *Śruti*, while the *Sūtras* are called *Smṛtis*. The *Śruti* is what is heard as opposed to what is composed ; it is revealed scripture, and self-authoritative, not composed by any human being. The *Rṣis*³ of the hymns of the Veda are thus called *Mantradṛṣṭāras* 'the seers of the *Mantras*'. They are the mediums of communication between gods and men. The *Smṛtis* imbibe the traditional works of human origin, which are solely based on the *Śrutis*. The *Smṛti* applies not only to the *Sūtra* works but also to the metrical codes of Manu, Yājñavalkya, etc.

The Vedic canon, comprises four great sections, viz. the *Rgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda*. Again, each of these has three main divisions - the *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas*. The *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* are loosely designated as '*Karma-Kāṇḍa*' the portion pertaining to rituals. The *Āraṇyakas* designated as '*Upāsanā-Kāṇḍa*', the portion relating to meditation, includes the *Upaniṣads* forming '*Jñāna-kāṇḍa*' portion dealing with supreme knowledge.

2. मंत्रा मननात् । Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII.13, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1967, p.138.

3. साक्षात्कृतधर्मणि ऋषयो बभूवुः । Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-20.

As far as *Samhitā* portion is concerned, there are four principal *Samhitās* related to four Vedas : *Rgveda Samhitā*, *Yajurveda Samhitā*, comprising *Taittiriya Samhitā* or *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* and *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* or *Śukla Yajurveda*; *Sāmaveda Samhitā*, and the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*. Besides these, there are three other *Samhitās* of lesser importance, viz. The *Kāthaka*, the *Kapiṣṭhalakāthaka*, and the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitās* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. These are collections of sacred hymns in *mantra* of different metres, and are mostly addressed in prayer to various gods and goddesses. There are, however, four *Samhitās*, which are notably different from one another, and each of which has several recensions. These are:

1. The *Rgveda Samhitā* - A collection of hymns.
2. The *Yajurveda Samhitā* - A collection of sacrificial formulas.
3. The *Sāmveda Samhitā* - A collection of songs mostly taken from the *Rgveda*.
4. The *Atharvaveda Samhitā* - A collection of spells and charms.

This four-fold division of the *Samhitās* evidently speaks of an elaborate development of the sacrificial rites. Since, even the simplest sacrifice requires the four principal priests related to four Vedas-*Hotṛ*, *Udgātṛ*, *Adhvaryu* and *Brahmā*. Originally there were only three *Vedas*.⁴ The *Atharvaveda* has been regarded as later development of Vedic canon. In the *Brāhmaṇas* view, the *Vedas* and the rituals, enjoined in them, are the correlates of the cosmic system. The *mantras* are the earth, the *Yajus* are the air and the

4. त्रयी वै विद्या । ऋचोद्यजूषि सामानीयमेवकर्चोऽस्याऽहर्वत्ति योऽर्चति स वागेवकर्चो व्वाचा हर्वत्ति सोऽन्तरिक्षमेव यजूषि ध्यौः सामानि । *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-7-1.
The Research Institute of Ancient Scientific Studies, Delhi, Vols-I-III, 1969.



Sāmans are the sky. Correspondingly, Agni belongs to the earth, Indra or Vāyu to the air and Sūrya to the sky.⁵ Hence, by the *mantras*, man conquers the earth, by the *Yajus*, the air, and by the *Sāmans*, the sky,⁶ and, in this process, also propitiates Agni, Indra and Sūrya. Hence, by this triad, he conquers the whole cosmos consisting of the three regions of the earth, atmosphere and sky. This is possible through the performance of the *Soma* ritual, since in it, all the three Vedas combine.⁷

The *Brāhmaṇas* are prose works, containing detailed descriptions of the sacrificial rites and the modes of their performance. Not only have all the four Vedas their separate *Brāhmaṇas* but even different schools of the same Veda have different *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Rgveda* has two *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* relating to the *Śākala* school and the *Kuśītaki Brāhmaṇa* represents the *Bāskala* school. To the *Sāmaveda* belong several *Brāhmaṇas* of which the *Tāṇḍya* or *Pañcavimśa*, and the *Ṣaḍvimśa* are well-known. To the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* has the *Taitiriya Brāhmaṇa* which is but a continuation of the *Taitiriya Samhitā*, and the *Śukla Yajurveda* has the *Śatapatha* in two schools. To the *Atharvaveda* belongs the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* which consists of two books. It toto, the *Brāhmaṇas* represent no doubt, a most interesting phase in the history of Indian thought.

The *Āraṇyakas* are works to be read in the forest. The *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads* often form the concluding portion of the

5. अग्निः प्रथिवीस्थानः । वायुर्बेन्द्रो वान्तरिक्षस्थानः । सूर्यो ध्युस्थानः । Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII-5.

6. इममेव लोकमृचा जयति । अंतरिक्षं व्यजुषा । दिवमेव साम्ना । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-7-2.

7. सैषा त्रयी विद्या सौम्येऽध्वरे प्रयुज्यते । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-7-1.

several *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Upaniṣads* mark an absolutely different path from that of the works that preceded them in the Vedic canon. The *Upaniṣads* like the *Vedas*, are however regarded as *Śruti* texts. They are popularly called the *Vedānta*. The total number of *Upaniṣads* is very large. Of these, *Aitareya* and *Kauśītaki* belong to the *R̥gveda*; the *Kaṭha*, the *Taittariyā*, the *Kaivalya*, the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Nārāyaṇa* to the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*; the *Iśa*, the *Brahadāraṇyaka* and the *Jābāla* to the *Śukla Yajurveda*; the *Kena* and the *Chāndōgya* to the *Sāmaveda*; and the *Praśna*, the *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍukya* and the *Nṛsiṁhatāpani* to the *Atharvaveda*.

Thus, it may be seen that these three major classes of Vedic literature, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads* mark three consecutive stages, not only in the Indian thought in general but in the life of every individual. The *Brāhmaṇas* advocating the actual observances of the sacrifice are meant for the *Grahaṣṭha*; the *Āraṇyakas* whose subject is the allegorical sacrifice, for the *Vānaprastha* and the *Upaniṣads* purely philosophic for the men of wisdom *Sanyāsins*. They mark the three distinct paths to *Nihśreyas*, viz., *Karma*, *Upāsanā* and *Jñāna*.

Further, the last phase of the Vedic literature consists of *Sūtra* section. The *Sūtra* literature forms a connecting link between the Vedic and post-Vedic literature. The most important works belonging to the *Sūtra* literature are the six *Vedāṅgas*. These are, *Śikṣā* (pronunciation), *Chandas* (metre), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy), and *Kalpa* (ceremonial). The *Vedāṅgas* have been intended to help the understanding of the Vedic texts. In course of time distinct schools of thought came



into existence for a systematic study of the various branches of Vedic knowledge. Those schools evolved special texts of their own, known as the *Sūtras*. The *Kalpasūtras* are the manuals on rituals, and there are four divisions of them. The *Śrautasūtras* deal with the rules relating to great sacrifices. The *Grhyasūtras* deal with the rules relating to domestic rights. The *Dharmasūtras* deal with *Dharma* or codes of laws. The *Śulvasūtras* deal with the measurement of *Yajñamaṇṭapas* and *Yajñavedis*. Following is the chart of entire Vedic literature under specific heads :

Veda	Śākhā	Brāhmaṇa	Araṇyaka	Upaniṣads
Rg	Śākala Bāskala	Aitareya Kauśitaki	Aitareya Kauśitaki	Aitareya Kauśitaki
Sāma	Jaiminiya Rāṇayaniya Kautuma	Pañcavimśa Ṣaḍvimśa Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Chāndogya	-	Chāndogya Kena
Kṛṣṇa Yajur	Taittiriya Maitrāyaṇī Kāṭhaka Kapiṣṭhala kāṭha	Taittiriya	Taittiriya	Taittiriya Maitrāyaṇī Kāṭha Śvetāśvatara
Śukla Yajur (Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā)	Kāṇva Mādyanandina	Śatapatha	Śatapatha	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Iśa
Atharva	Śaunaka Paippalāda	Gopatha	-	Mandūka Praśna Mandūkyā

The Veda as a whole, has been traditionally recognised as non-human composition, the eternal store-house of highest knowledge, and as endowed with supernatural efficacy. Inspiration and intallibility are the two chief attributes of the Veda. From the *Atharvaveda* and the *Purāṇas*, a large number of passages may be quoted bearing on this subject, which all agree in preaching that

the Veda had a divine or mystic origin. The Veda deals with something supernatural which cannot be made known by ordinary perception and inference. This is clear from the following extract from the *Vedārth Prakāśa* of *Mādhavāchārya* on the *Taittirīya Yajurveda*:

इष्टप्राप्यनिष्ट परिहारयोरलौकिकमुपायं यो ग्रन्थो वेदवति स वेदः।
अलौकिकपदेन प्रत्यक्षानुमाने व्यावर्त्येते।⁸

The *Naiyāyikas*, while admitting the unquestionable authority of the Vedas, assert that they are the works of *Íśvara*, the highest Self, who is all-pervading, free from desire and happiness etc. In the *Jaiminiyanyāyamālāvistara*, of *Vidyāraṇya* the idea of human-composition of the Veda is refused :

पौरुषेयं न वा वेदवाक्यं स्यात्पौरुषेयता । काठकादिसमाख्यानाद्वाक्यत्वाच्चान्यवाक्यवद् । ।
समाख्याद्यापकल्पेन वाक्यत्वं तु पराहतम् । तत्कर्त्रनुपलम्भेन स्यात्ततोऽपौरुषेयता । ॥(I.1,25-26)

This view further is found to have been held by all post-Vedic scholars.

The *Vedāntins* too, argue that the Vedas are not of human origin. This *Apauruśeyatva* is technically explained by them thus : "No. In the first place, connection with a person does not mean being uttered by a person, for even according to the *Pūrvamimāṃsā* school of the Kumārila Baṭṭa. The Vedas would be connected with persons, beings handed down from one teacher to another. Nor does connection with a person mean having an origin due to a person, for that inference about the personal origin of the Vedas, which is approved by the logicians is condemned by our school as providing what is already established. But it is being the object of

8. Q.Dr. N.S. Anantarangachar, *Vaidika Sāhitya Caritre* (Kan), Mysore, 2001, p-32.

utterance that is independent of any utterance of the same kind. For instance, in the beginning of cosmic projection, the Lord produced Vedas having a sequence of words similar to that which had already existed in the Vedas in the previous cosmic projection, and not Vedas of a different type. Hence the Vedas, not being the object of utterance that independent of any utterance of the same kind, are not connected with a person. The utterance of the *Mahābhārata* etc. however, is not at all dependent on any utterance of the same kind. Hence they are connected with a person. Thus two kinds of verbal testimony have been determined, viz., that which is connected with a person, and that which is not.⁹ And, the beginning portion of the *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya* of *Madhva* elucidates and establishes the theory of non-human composition of the Vedas, on the basis of the logic and scriptural texts.¹⁰

Besides, the aforesaid authoritativeness of the Vedas, there were many other schools of exegesis, most of which have now faded into oblivion. One such school was that of the *Aitihāsikās* who traced the historical personalities to the Vedic sources and located their activities in the settings of events with spatio-temporal contexts. For instance, *Aitihāsikās* hold that *Vṛtra* was an Asura, the son of *Tvastṛ*.¹¹ The *Aśvins* as two pious kings.¹² Another instance may

9. न हि तावत् पुरुषेण उच्चार्यमाणत्वं पौरुषेयत्वम्, गुरुमतेऽप्यध्यापक परम्परया पौरुषेयत्वापत्तेः। नापि पुरुषाधीनोत्पत्तिकल्पं पौरुषेयत्वम्, नैयायिकाभिमतपौरुषेयत्वानुमानेऽस्मदादिना सिद्धसाधनापत्तेः। किन्तु सजातीयोच्चारणानपेक्षोच्चारणविषयत्वम्। तथा च सर्गाद्यकाले परमेश्वरः पूर्वसर्गसिद्धिवेदानुपूर्वीसमानानुपूर्विकं वेदं विरचितवान्, न तु तद्विजातीयं वेदमिति सजातीयोच्छारणनपेक्षोच्चारणविषयत्वं पौरुषेयत्वं वेदस्य। भारतादीनानु सजातीयोच्चारणमनपेक्षयैवोच्चारणमिति तेषां पौरुषेयत्वम्। एवं पौरुषेयापौरुषेयभेदेन द्विविध आगमो निरूपितः। Dharmarāja Adhvarendra, *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, Ed. Swami Mādhavandanda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1989 pp-14-15.

10. *Madhva*, *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya*, ed. Prof. K.T. Pandurangi, Bangalore, 1992, pp-2-6.

11. तत्को वृत्रः। त्वाष्ट्रोऽसुर इत्यैतिहासिकाः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-16.

12. तत्कावश्विनौ। राजानौ पुण्यकृतावित्यैतिहासिकः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, XII-1.

be given: "They concealed the impartial lady from the mortals ; having made one of like appearance, they gave her to the sun. And Saranyu bore the Aśvins when that took place, and deserted the two twins."¹³

"They concealed the immortal lady from the mortals. Having made one of similar appearances, they gave her to the Sun. Saranyu supported the Aśvins when that took place, and deserted the two twins. 'The atmospheric (Indra) and the atmospheric speech (are meant) ; say the etymologists ; 'Yama and Yami', say the historians. With reference to this, they relate a legend.

Saranyu daughter of Traṣṭṛ bore twins, Yama and Yami, to Vivasvat the Sun. She having substituted another lady of similar appearance, and having assumed the shape of a mare, ran away. He, Vivasvat, the sun, having also assumed the shape of a horse, pursued her, and joined her. Thence the Aśvins were born. Manu was born from the lady of similar appearance".¹⁴

In their view, Devāpi and Śantanu, sons of Rṣtiṣeṇa, mentioned in the *Rgveda*, were Kauravya princes. With reference to this, one may find the following legend : Devāpi and Śantanu, sons of Rṣtiṣeṇa, were two brothers, who belonged to the clan of the Kurus, Śantanu, the younger brother, caused himself to be installed as

13. अपागृहन्नमृतां मर्त्येभ्यः कृत्वा सवर्णामिदुर्विवस्वते ।

उताश्विनावभरद्यत्तदासिदजहा द्वा मिथुना सरण्यूः ॥ *Rgveda*, X-17-2

14. उपागृहन्नमृतां मर्त्येभ्यः कृत्वा सवर्णामिदुर्विवस्वते । अप्यश्विनाभरत् यत्तदासीत् । अजहाद् द्वौ मिथुनौ सरण्यूः । मध्यमं च माद्यमिकां च वाचमिति नैरुक्ताः ॥ । यमं च यमीं चेत्यैतिहासिकाः । तत्रैतिहासमाचक्षते । त्वष्ट्री सरण्यूर्विवस्वत आदित्याद्यमौ मिथुनौ जनयात्वकार । स सवर्णामन्यां प्रतिनिधायाश्वारूपं कृत्वा प्रादुद्वाव । स विवस्वानादित्य आश्वमेव रूपं कृत्वा तामनुसृत्य संबभूव । ततोऽश्विनौ जज्ञाते । सवर्णायां मनुः । तदभिवादिन्येषार्भवति ॥ *Yāska, Nirukta*, XII-10.



king. Devāpi retired to practice austerities. From that time the god did not rain for twelve years in kingdom of Śantanu. The priests said to him, "Thou hast committed (an act of) unrighteousness. Because thou hast caused theyself to be installed as king, having put their elder brother aside, therefore the god does not rain in their kingdom." Then he, i.e. Śantanu, sought to invest Devāpi with sovereignty. To him said Devāpi 'Let me be they priest and sacrifice for thee.'¹⁵

Here is this hymn expressed a desire for rain. The following is a stanza of this hymn.

"The seer Devāpi, son of Rṣtiṣeṇa, acting as the performing priest, knew (how to obtain) the goodwill of gods. He caused the divine waters to flow from the upper to the lower ocean by means of rain."¹⁶

Yāska considers this narrative as a dialogue (*Samvāda*), while Śaunaka treats it as *Itihāsa* (history).¹⁷ However, the historical aspect of this episode is so strong that Durga is compelled to quote it along with the *Nairukta* view. The historians view is also quoted by Yāska in his remarks on the *Rgveda* X.82.2. According to *Aitihāsikas*, Viśvakarman mentioned in it, was the son of Bhuvana. He

15. तत्रेतिहासमाचक्षते । देवापिश्चार्षिषेणः शंतनुश्च कौरव्यौ भ्रातरौ बभूवतुः । स शंतनु कनीयानभिषेचयांचक्रे । देवापिस्तपः प्रतिपेदे । ततः शंतनो राज्ये द्वादशवर्षाणि देवो न वर्ष । तमुचुब्राह्मणाः । अर्धमस्त्वया चरितः । ज्येष्ठं भ्रातरमन्तरित्याभिषेचितम् । तस्माते देवो न वर्षतीति । स शंतनुदेवापिं शिशिक्ष राज्येन । तमुवाच देवापिः । पुरोहितस्तेऽसानि । याजयानि च त्वेति । तस्यैतद् वर्षकामसूक्तम् । तस्यैषा भवति ॥
Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-10.

16. आष्टिषेणो होत्रमृषिर्नि षीदन्देवापिर्देवसुमतिं चिकित्वान् ।
स उत्तरस्मादथरं समुद्रमपो दिव्या असृजद्वर्ष्या अभि ॥ *Rgveda* X-98-5

17. आह्वानं प्रति चाख्यानमितरेतरयोरिदम् ।
संवादं मन्यन्ते यास्क इतिहासन्तु शौनकः ॥ Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, VII-153.
Ed. A.A. Macdonell, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1994, p-91

sacrificed all beings in a universal sacrifice, sacrificing even himself at the end. But the *Ādhyātmavidins* treated him as the soul, controlling the seven senses; and the *Nairuktas* considered him as the Sun dominating over the seven luminaries.¹⁸ The *Bṛhaddevatā* quotes about forty myths and legends about Vedic characters which must have been current among the *Aītihāsikas*. The Veda is, thus, the earliest collection of historical myths which later have been seen developed in the Great Epics like *Mahābhārata*, *Purāṇas*, etc.

In his commentary on *Mīmāṁsasūtra*. 1.1.28. Śabaravāmin cites the view of those, who consider the Veda as historical in character and hence subject to the process of time. They hold that the Vedic *mantras* have a definite existence in time and therefore cannot be treated as eternal. The expressions 'Babara Prāvāhaṇi desired', Kusurubinda Uddalki desire; demonstrate that the texts, mentioning them, cannot be anterior to Prāvāhaṇi and Auddalaki respectively and are thus relative to time.¹⁹ Likewise, the allusions of specific persons in the Vedas and the naming of different recensions after individuals as *Kāṭhaka*, *Kālāpaka*, *Paippalādaka*, *Maudgala* prove that they observe some chronological sequence.²⁰

18. विश्वकर्मा भौवनः सर्वमेधे सर्वाणि भूतानि जुहुवाज्यकारा । सः आत्मानमपि आन्ततः जुहुवाज्यकार ।

Yāska, *Nirukta*, X-26.

19. अनित्य दर्शनाच्च । *Mīmāṁsasūtra*, I-1,28.

Śabara's comment :

जननमरणवन्तश्च वेदार्थः श्रूयन्ते बबरः प्रावाहणिरकामयत, कुसुरुबिन्द औद्दालकिरकामयत इत्येवमादयः । उद्दालकस्यापत्यं गम्यते औद्दालकिः यद्येवं प्रागौद्दालकिजन्मनो नायं ग्रन्थो भूतपूर्वः एवमप्यनीत्यता ।

Q. S.K. Ramanatha Shastri, *Bṛhati of Prabhākara Miśra* (Tarkapāda), University of Madras, 1934. p.403.

20. वेदाश्चैके सत्रिकर्ष पुरुषाख्याः । *Mīmāṁsasūtra*, I-1,27

Śabara's comment : पुरुषेणा ही समाख्यायन्ते वेदाः - काठकं कालापकं, पैष्टलादकं, मौद्गलमिति । Ibid., p.402.

There cannot be a word or sentence without a person, because the person is *Kartā* (agent) and the word is *Kārya* (effect).²¹ The Vedas, having a linguistic conspectus consisting of words, must, therefore, be the creation of man.²² Though the names of such personalities may have been lost to us.²³

In fine, according to the historians, the Vedas are human compositions relative to time and place.

So far as the views held by the modern Vedic scholars in this matter are concerned, they may be reckoned as the significant literature in the history not only of the Indians but also the entire mankind. In addition to the hymns of religious, sacrificial and philosophical significance, the *Rgveda* includes hymns of domestic rites, mythological poems, dialogues, panegyrics of kings, didactic compositions and songs that throw light on social institutions and activities, occupations and recreations. It is not proper to say that the Aryans of the *Rgveda* were primitive; but in fact they were in a sufficiently advanced stage of civilization which is clearly proved by the contents of the hymns themselves. In this connection, to quote Max Muller: "In the history of the world, the Veda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us back to times of which we have no records anywhere and gives us the very words of a generation of men of whom otherwise we could form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjecture and inferences. As long as man continues to take an interest in the

21. Ibid., न च पुरुषस्य शब्देनास्ति सम्बन्धोऽन्यदत्तः - कर्ता पुरुषः कार्यः शब्द इति ।

22. Ibid., तत्र पौरुषेयाश्चेद्वेदाः असंशयं पौरुषेयः चोदनाः ।

23. Ibid., अस्मर्यमाणोऽपि चोदनायाः कर्ता स्यात् ।

history of his race, and as long as we collect in the libraries and museums the relics of former ages, the first place in that long row of books which contain the records of the Aryan branch of mankind, will belong forever to the *Rgveda*.²⁴

To quote Winternitz : "There exists no more important source for the investigation of the earliest stages in the development of Indian religion, no more important source for the investigation of mythology of the Indo-European peoples, indeed of peoples in general, than these songs of the *Rgveda*.²⁵

Thus the Veda, the sole source of knowing the history of the ancient Indian culture. The *Rgveda* is the oldest record of the Aryans whose immediate descendants we are. It belongs to a period of thousand of years left from us, of which no other records, no monuments are available. It is indeed very fortunate that the *Rgveda*, though so old and voluminous in extent, has been preserved to us, in a form correct to a syllable, by oral tradition in India. In the *Rgveda* were we face to face with our ancestors, we see how they lived, how they spoke, how they thought, what religion and faith they professed, how they worshipped their gods, what their ideals were.

The Indian mind is the same in many respects, whether in the Vedic Age or present time. If it be asked, what that unifying principle is, which runs through all the several aspects of Indian life and temperament ? The reply is that it is the influence of the

24. Max Muller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, Chawkamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1968, p-63.

25. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi-55, 1973, Vol.I, p-75.

Veda and Vedic Age, which has permeated all strata of Indians and which is seen in every little act of ours. Whether it be religion, whether it be philosophy, morals, literature and social habits, we detect everywhere its influence.

Historical Compositions in the *Rgveda* :

In the Vedic literature, there are two types of compositions which may be called historical. 1) Hymns or passages from which modern scholars have attempted to extract some historical events, materials conditions of the period, geographical or topographical details, etc.

2) Those that are unanimously accepted as forms of Vedic historiography ; these may be called historical compositions.

They reflect the ideas and attitudes of ancient thinkers regarding history. Attempts of modern scholars to discover some rudiments of history in the Vedic hymns, reveals their notions of history nurtured on the writings of European scholars of the Nineteenth Century.

The historical materials in the *Rgveda Samhitā* involve the blending of mythological as well as historical characters and incidents in an inextricable confusion.

In a hymn of the *Rgveda* I-63, addressed to Indra, the seer observes in the same breath that the demons Śuṣṇa and Vṛtra as well as the enemies of the historical kings Purukutsa and Sudāś were overpowered by the god Indra.

A hymn IV-30 states that Śambara, Varcin, Arṇa, and Citraratha were crushed by Indra, that Turvaśa and Yadu were safely carried



over a flood, and that the enemies of kings Divodāsa and Dabhīti were destroyed.

The story of Turvayāṇa's delivery from his enemies, Kutsa, Āyu and the historical prince Atithigva, is found in hymns I-53 and V-18.

The hymn IX-61, addressed to *Soma*, refers to the overthrowing of Nintynine cities and Divodāsa's victory over Śambara, Turvaśa and Yadu.

Referring to the type of historical compositions as such a short extract (*Rv.* IV-42) may be quoted wherein it is described that Purukustsa, son of Durgaha was captured ; but his wife propitiated the seven sages as well as the gods Indra and Varuṇa and obtained a famous son Trasadasyu.

The hymn III-33 tells in the form of a dialogues between Viśvāmitra and 'the pair of mothers' Vipāś and Śutudrī, how the Bharatas engaged in a raid, were able to cross the rivers in high flood through the sage's prayers.

Victory of a king Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna over Vṛcivatsa and Turvaśa is recorded in VI-27 ; while hymn 26th of the same *Mandala* refers to the destruction by Indra of Śusṇa for Kutsa, of Śambara for Divodāsa and Cumuri for Dabhīti.

The hymns of the seventh *Mandala* in the *Rgveda* 18, 33 and 83 deal with the most famous battle of ten kings which otherwise called *Dāśarājña*. This was the battle of a group of ten kings against the king Sudās who won a glorious victory over them on the banks of the Paruṣṇī river. The *Rsi* vividly brings out successive stages of

the battle, the numbers and equipment of the troops as well as their military tactics.

The hymns VII-33 and III-53 are illustrations of the families of Vaśiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra respectively.

There are many other passages in the *Rgveda* that describe rivers, mountains, seas and deserts.

These historical passages are portions of prayers addressed to Indra, Soma, rivers and other deities. They also contain the myths and legends. An account of supernatural elements is also found therein.

Vamśa, Gotra-Pravara types of Historical composition :

Vamśa :

The ceremonies of the Vedic sacrificial ritual which form the entire subject-matter of the later *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*, implies a long succession of teachers through whom they were handed down from the most ancient down to comparatively recent times. It is to the period of the *Brāhmaṇas* which exhibit the first systematic exposition of the sacrificial ceremonies, that we can trace back the oldest genealogical lists (*vamśas*) of the Vedic teachers and their pupils. A mention of *Vamśa* is found at the end of the late *Śāṅkhayana Āraṇyaka* of the *Rgveda*. This consists of eighteen names beginning with *Guṇākhyā Śāṅkhāyana* and ending with *Brahma* the self-existent one. One particular ground, the names and succession of human teachers may be broadly accepted as a historical fact.

Gotra - Pravara :

The *Gotra* and *Pravara* are found intimately connected with the social and religious system of the Vedic Aryans from an early period. These may be translated as respectively as 'family' and 'the illustrious ancestors'. It would seem that a very long interval separated the beginnings of the *gotra* and *Pravara* divisions from their systematic arrangement in the *Śrauta-Sūtras*. These old genealogical lists are shown as a substratum of historical reality.

The Gāthas and the Nārāśamīśis :

The *Gāthā*, means epic-song verse and is associated with the sages of the Kaṇva family of the *Bṛghvāṅgīrasa* group, as well as with the family of Viśvāmitra. The *gātha* and *nārāśamīśis* have their parallels, at least in part, in some hymns and portions of hymns in the *R̥gveda*. The first instance is the *Dānastutis* (praises of gifts). The *gāthā* and *nārāśamīśis* occupy an important place in the development of Indian historical literature. Apart from the *gāthās* to the gods, they may be proved by references in the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* to relate to historical characters and incidents. Thus, Janamejaya, Pārikṣita of the Kuru race, Marutta Āvikṣita king of the Pāñcāla and Bharata Duḥṣanti of the great Bharata tribe, are well-known celebrities in the later *Śamhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* literature.

The Ākhyānas :

The *Ākhyānas* of Śunahṣepa, Purūravas etc., can be traced to some ancient tradition reflected in *R̥gvedic* hymns. These hymns, by their dramatic quality, indicate the existence of semi-dramatic

and semi-epic *ākhyāna* literature, out of which, grew the later historical epics and dramas.

The Itihāsa and Purāṇa :

The *Nirukta* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* trace *itihāsa* and *ākhyana* to the *Rgveda*. These texts explain some *Rgvedic* hymns to be the mixtures of *rk*, *gāthā*, *itihāsa*, while three hymns at least are described as *itihāsa-sūktas* (I-165; VIII-91-2 & X-102). *Itihāsa* as a work of historical nature is mentioned by the *Atharvaveda* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, where, it means *Purāvṛtta* (ancient events). The *Nirukta* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* refer to *itihāsa* in this sense. *Itihāsa* is usually coupled with *Purāṇa* which means ancient lore. Indeed, the *gāthās*, *nārāśamīśis* and *ākhyānas* together strengthened the *itihāsa-purāṇa* traditions.



CHAPTER - II

STRUCTURE OF RGVEDA

1. The Arrangement of the *Rgveda Samhitā*

The *Rgveda Samhitā* is rather a group of *mantras* visualised by several seers of that age. The form on which the *Samhitā* of the *Rgveda* has come down to us clearly shows that the different *Sūktas* were brought together and systematically arranged long before. The different portions of the *Samhitā* represent various indications of language, vocabulary, style, grammar, metre and ideas.

The *Rgveda Samhitā* is a collection of 1,028 *Sūktas* (hymns) divided into ten *Māṇḍalas* (books). These 1,028 *Sūktas* include eleven *Vālakhilya Sūktas*. The number of *mantras* in a *Sūktas* varies from just one (I-99) to 58 (IX-97). The total number of *mantras* is 10,462; thus the average number of *mantras* per hymn is ten. These hymns are seen by various seers.

There are two ways of dividing the contents of the *Rgveda*, one into *Aṣṭakas*, *Adhyāyas* and *Vargas*, and the other into *Māṇḍalas*, *Anuvākas* and *Sūktas*. Of these, the former is popular among traditionalists because of the convenience of study. The *Rgveda Samhitā* is divided into eight *Aṣṭakas*, each *Aṣṭaka*

consists of eight *Adhyāyas* and each *Adhyāya* consists of several *Vargas*. A *Varga* being usually made up of five *mantras*, sometimes more and sometimes less. This is the division popular with the *Vaidikas* with whom a *Varga* is the measure of a lesson. This division is purely mechanical.

The second type of division, however, though no doubt also mechanical in character, has some scientific historical principles to support it. There are ten *Māṇḍalas* divided into several *Anuvākas*. The first *Māṇḍala* contains twenty four; the second four; the third and fourth five each; the fifth, sixth and seventh six each; the eighth ten; the ninth seven; and the tenth *Māṇḍala* contains twelve *Anuvākas*. Each *Anuvāka* consists of a number of *Sūktas*, and each *Sūkta* contains different number of *mantras*.

In order to understand the purpose of arrangement which underlies this division, it is necessary to remember that every *Sūkta* has a *Rṣi* (seer), *Devatā* (deity) and *Chandas* (metre), without whose knowledge the meaning of the hymn cannot properly be understood nor can the hymn be efficiently applied.¹ What *rṣi*, *devatā* and *chandas* mean is briefly stated by *Kātyāyana*:

यस्य वाक्यं स ऋषिः । या तेनोच्यते सा देवता । यदक्षर परिमाणं तच्छन्दः । अर्थेष्व
ऋषयो देवताश्छन्दोभिरूपादावन् ॥²

The *Rṣis* are the composers of the various hymns of the *Rgveda*. For every *sūkta*, the *Anukramaṇīs* give the name of its

1. अविदित्वा ऋषिं छन्दो दैवतं योगमेव च ।

योऽद्यापये जपेद्वादि पापीयाज्ञायते तु सः ॥ Q. *Vaidika Sāhitya Caritre* (Kan), p-73.

2. कात्यायन, ऋग्वेद-सर्वतुक्रमणि, Ed. U.C.Sharma, Vivek Publications, Aligarh, U.P. 1977, p-1

Rsi ; and there are about four hundred such *Rsis*. From the orthodox point of view, they are regarded as not composers or writers but as seers. Vedas are revealed scriptures, self-evident and self authoritative, not composed by human authors. The seers of the hymns are thus called “*mantra dr̄stārah*” (the seers of the *mantras*).³ They are not responsible for the contents of the *mantras*. they are only mediums communicating between gods and men. Yāska says,⁴ that *Dharma* (duty) revealed itself to the seers who handed it down by oral instruction to that descendants, to whom *Dharma* did not itself manifest itself.

The *Rgveda* consisting of three portions follows from the fact that the *Rsis* where divided broadly into three divisions :

1. *Śatārcināḥ* - the *Rsis* of the first *mandala* each of whom, seems to have contributed nearly hundred *mantras*.
2. *Madhyamāḥ* - the *Rsis* of two to seven *mandalas*, and
3. *Kṣudrasūktāḥ* and *Mahāsūktāḥ* - the *Rsis* of shorter and longer hymn.⁵

In the *Rgveda*, two to seven *mandalas* are homogeneous in character as they present a collection of hymns belonging to a particular family. These *mandalas* are known as *Kulamandalas*,

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3. अतीन्द्रियस्य वेदस्य परमेश्वरानुग्रहेण प्रथमतो दर्शनाद् ऋषित्वम्। Sāyaṇa, Commentary on *Rgveda* I-1-1
 4. साक्षात्कृत धर्माण ऋषयो बभूवुः। तेऽवरेभ्योऽसाक्षात्कृत धर्मभ्य उपदेशेन मन्त्रान्संप्राप्तुः। उपदेशाय ग्लायन्तोऽवरे बिल्मग्रहणायेमं ग्रन्थं समाप्नासिषुर्वेदं च वेदाङ्गानि च ॥ Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-20
 5. अथ ऋषयः। शतार्चिनो मध्यमा गृत्समदो विश्वामित्रो वामदेवोऽत्रिर्भरद्वाजा वसिष्ठः प्रगाथाः पावमान्याः क्षुद्रसूक्ता महासूक्ता इति ॥ Āśvalāyana Gr̄hya-sūtra, III-3-3, Ed. K.P. Aithal, the Adyar Library, Madras, 1980.



to seven were taken out and collected together in one separate *mandala*, and at the same time arranged with regard to the metre. The hymns 1 to 67 are *Gāyatri*, 68 to 86 in *Jagati*, 87 to 97 in *Trisṭub* and the 98 to 144 in miscellaneous.

Mandalas one and ten form the latest portions of the *Rgveda*. Of these, first *mandala* contains 14 groups, each referred to one common seer and having hymns arranged according to the deities, on the same principles as in *mandala* two to seven. For example, the first group of first *mandala* consists of eleven hymns are related to Viśvāmitra Madhuchandas, of which, hymn first is addressed to Agni, second to Vāyu, third to Aśvins and Indra, and the rest to Indra.

The language and the contents of the hymns attributed to different seers in the tenth *mandala* point out that it contains a good number of hymns of later origin.

The only principle which connects the different hymns of the *mandala* is numerical.

In this tenth *mandala*, a series of collections is arranged in the descending order of the number of hymns in each and extending from hymn 1 to 84. From hymn 85 to 191 single hymns are arranged in the descending order.

Further, hymns of the *Rgveda Samhitā* may be divided into two classes: religious and secular. The great majority of hymns are mainly the invocations to gods like Agni and Indra requesting them to accept the oblations, and favour the worshippers with generous gifts. The seers glorify the heroic deeds of the deities and munificence of their patrons. The Soma hymns describe the

crushing of the Soma-plant, the extraction of the Soma-juice, the preparation of Soma-drink by mixing ingredients like milk and honey and its exhilarating effects enabling the deities to perform their valiant deeds.

Among the secular hymns, there are famous *Akṣa-Sūkta* (X-34) recalling the ruin brought by dice; the *Bhikṣu-Sūkta* (X-117) glorifying the gift of food; the *Bhoja-Sūkta* (X-11) singing the glory of the prosperity of the donor etc. The hymns comprising dialogues between the River and Viśvāmitra (III-33), Sarama and Paṇis (X-108), Indra and Apāla(VIII-91), Yama and Yami (X-10), Urvaśi and Purūravas (X-95) etc. are interesting even from a literary view-point. Hymns like *Svāpanam* (VIII-55) are supposed to be endowed with miraculous power. The *Sūrya Vivāha-Sūkta* throws light on the contemporary customs and the *Pitr-Sūkta* reveals the details of contemporary funeral rites. Hymns like the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* (X-90) and *Nāsadiya-Sūkta* (X-29) help us to trace the Vedic cosmological and philosophical ideas. The Panegyrics like I-126 are semi-historical as they give the genealogical details of the donors and the names of the Vedic tribes. A couple of hymns (I-164 and VII-29) consists of riddles, largely connected with gods. The *Jñāna-Sūkta* (IX-71) declares the supreme importance of knowledge. Besides the religious and mythological details, those hymns reveal various facts of the life of the Vedic people. Thus, the contents of the *Rgveda* are richly varied, revealing the contemporary life and thought which form the basis of evolution of Indian thought and culture through the ages.

Vālakhilya Sūktas:

A group of eleven hymns is known by the name of *Vālakhilya*, which stands by itself and which is generally put at

the end of the eighth *maṇḍala*. They are not recognized by older writers, nor commented on by Sāyaṇa, though mentioned in Kātyāyana's *Sarvānukramaṇī*. That these do not naturally belong to the place where they are found is quite clear. The earliest interpretations of the name *Vālakhilya* are found in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*:⁶

स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तस्वा शरीरमद्भुत । तस्य यन्मांसमासीत्ततोऽरुणाः केतवो वतरशना
ऋषयः उदतिष्ठन् । ये नखास्ते वैखानसाः ये बालास्ते बालखिल्याः ।

The fact that these *Vālakhilya* hymns disturb the regularity of both the *maṇḍala* and *Aṣṭaka* divisions shows that they were later additions.

Apri -Sūktas:

The *Apri Sūktas* are peculiar in character. They resemble the hymns which are found in the *Sāma* and the *Yajurveda*, being evidently meant for sacrificial purpose. These are ten in number, which are scattered here and there in the ten *maṇḍalas*.

Maṇḍala	Sūkta	R̥ṣi
1	13	Medhātithi (Kaṇva clan)
1	142	Dirghatamas
1	188	Agastya
2	3	Gr̥tsamada
3	4	Viśvāmitra
5	5	Vasuśruta
7	2	Vasiṣṭha
9	5	Asita or Devala
10	70	Sumitra
10	110	Rāma-Jamadagni

6. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, I-23

The *Apri* hymns generally contain eleven *mantras* each, addressed to eleven separate deities in the following order; **First** *mantra* to Agni, **second** to Tanūnapat or Nāraśamīsa (to other aspects of Agni), **third** to Ilā a (gift), **fourth** to Barhiḥ (sacrificial pile of grass), **fifth** to Devī or Dvarah, **sixth** to Uṣasanakau, **seventh** to Devyau Hotārau, (Agni and Āditya etc.), **eighth** to Sarasvatī, Ilā and Bhārati, **ninth** to Tvaṣṭah (the creator), **tenth** to Vanaspati, (the tree of the sacrifice), **eleventh** to Svāhākṛti. The position of these artificial hymns necessarily presupposes a deliberate arrangement on the part of the collectors.

i. The Interpretation of the *Rgveda*

The 'word-interpretations' means to bring out clearly the intended meaning of the words employed by a speaker in particular context. Difficulty in understanding the meaning of the *Rgvedic mantras*, arises mainly from the fact that the Vedic text contain number of rare obsolete and obscure words which are not met in a later language. The language of the Vedas and specially that of the *Rgveda* is highly technical, polished and often figurative. In this connection, the following observation of M. Bloomfield is noteworthy ; "the entire Vedic tradition, the *Rgveda* not accepted, present rather the conclusion than the bringing of the long period of literary activity. Conventionality of subject matter, style, form (metre) etc. betray themselves at every step".⁷ The seers have carefully and purposely selected each word of their hymns after a thorough consideration of the

7. M. Bloomfield, *Sacred Book of the East*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1884, Vol.42, p-xiii.

subtleties and shades of the meaning of appropriate words. The seers are very fond of employing figurative speech, and the use of metaphor is quite common in the Vedic language. This particularity of the Vedic style has been noticed in the *Brāhmaṇas* which observe that “the gods love recondite speech and abhor direct statements”.⁸

It is mainly due to the figurative use of the Vedic idioms that even, when there is no doubt about the literal meanings of the words employed in the Vedic *mantrs*, their real importance remains vague. In this connection Max Muller has remarked : “the Vedic hymns on the contrary, even when we understand every word of them, remain very obscure in their structure or construction”.⁹ It is obvious that if the Vedic *mantras* are literally translated in accordance with the usage of classical Sanskrit, it creates confusion, and results in sheer absurdity.

The problem of Vedic interpretation is not of recent origin. When Yāska composed his *Nirukta*, the problem of Vedic interpretation was as intricate as it is today. Even prior to Yāska, the meaning of numerous Vedic words and passages has become so much obscure that some persons began to doubt seriously whether the Vedic *mantras* convey any sense at all. Yāska in this connection refers to the view point of Kautsa who boldly declares that the Vedic *mantras* convey no sense.¹⁰ Yāska

8. परोक्ष कामा हि देवाः। *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI-1-1-2

परोक्षप्रिया इव हि देवा भवन्ति प्रत्यक्षा दिशः। *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-2-21

9. Max Muller, *The Vedas*, Calkatta, 1956, p-49

ज्ञातेष्वपि पदार्थेषु वाक्यार्थपरिकल्पनम्, अशक्यम् ऋक्सु भहीषु नरैरकृतबुद्धिभिः।

c.f. *Rgvedānukramaṇī*, Ed. by C.Kunhan Raja, part-II, p-80

10. अनर्थका हि मन्त्राः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-15

first reproduces the arguments advanced by Kautsa, then refutes them one by one, and finally proves his own view point ridiculing Kautsa's gross ignorance about the Vedic lore.

Since very early times, scholars have sought to interpret the Vedas in different ways. No uninterrupted reliable tradition of Vedic interpretation was handed down along with the Vedic *mantras*. The inheritors of these texts began to advance their own conjectures with regard to an authentic tradition of Vedic interpretation. The tendency to make surmises and read pre-conceived notion into the Vedas, led to the emergence of different schools of Vedic interpretation. Already , at the time of Yāska at least the following five schools of Vedic interpretation, had come into existence, namely, those of the *Yājñikas*,¹¹ *Nairuktas*¹² the *Aitihāsikas*¹³ the *Parivrājakas*,¹⁴ and the *Naidānas*.¹⁵

The Yājñika School

The Yājñika school of Vedic exegesis which puts ritualistic interpretations on the Vedas, is the most ancient and predominant among all the existing schools of Vedic interpretations. It has get a

11. तत्रैतद् यज्ञिका वेदयन्ते । Yāska, *Nirukta*, V-11.
अथान्यत्र यज्ञात्माजापत्वा इति यज्ञिकाः । Ibid., VII-4.
VII-23; XI-29,31; XIII-9, etc.
12. वर्षकर्मेति नैरुक्ताः । Ibid., II-8.
प्राश्नुत एनं वर्ण इति नैरुक्ताः । Ibid., I-14.
I-12; II-16; III-8,4, etc.
13. त्वाष्टोऽसुर इत्यैतिहासिकाः । Ibid., I-16.
राजानौ पुण्यकृतावित्यैतिहासिकाः । Ibid., XII-1.
14. बहुप्रजाः कृच्छमापद्यत इति परिव्राजकाः । Ibid., II-9.
15. स्याल आसन्नः संयोगेनेति नैदानाः । Ibid, VI-9.
ऋचा समं मेन इति नैदानाः । Ibid, VII-12. etc.

very long uninterrupted tradition. The earliest attempt to put ritualistic interpretations on the Vedic *mantras* is discernible in the compilation of the *Yajurveda* in which a considerable number of *mantras* from the *Rgveda* had been adapted for sacrificial purpose. In this connection, Shri Ram Gopal has concluded: "It is imperative to determine the propriety of ritual application of a Vedic *mantra* before passing a judgement on its ritualistic interpretations attempted by ancient Indian commentators. There is no doubt that the tradition of ritual application of Vedic *mantras* has proved both a boon and a bane of Vedic studies. On the one hand, it has contributed a good deal to the preservation of the Vedic texts. But on the other, it has, to a certain extent, proved a hindrance in the correct unbiased interpretation of the Vedas."¹⁶

The Nairukta School

The first systematic attempt to interpret the Vedas was made by the *Nairuktas*, the proponents of the science of etymology. *Nairuktas* sought to interpret Vedic words on the basis of their derivative connection. It may be termed as *Nairukta* method of Vedic interpretation. The origin of this method may be traced to the *Brāhmaṇas*, which attempt the derivation of a number of Vedic words. The development of *Nairukta* method of Vedic interpretation is closely connected with the progress of grammatical and lexicographical studies in India. Therefore, Yāskā in his *Nirukta* declares the science of etymology

16. Ramgopal, *The History and Principles of the Vedic Interpretation*. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1983, p.37

to be complementary to grammar.¹⁷ Yāska's *Nirukta* is the last and best representative of the *Nirukta* school. Yāska refers by name, to about a dozen authorities on *Nirukta*, viz. Aupamanyava, Śākapūṇi, Gālava, Maudgalya, Agrāyaṇa, Kaṭṭhakya, Kraustuki, Aurṇāvabha, Audumbarāyaṇa, Gārgya, and Śakaṭāyaṇa.

In fact, *Nirukta* is an independent and isolated branch of study but was only one of the several branches of the linguistic study of the Vedas. The *Padapāṭha* and the *Prātiśākhyas* were the other two important branches of the Vedic linguistic study which, being anterior to the *Nirukta*, are explicitly mentioned by Yāska in his work, and which undoubtedly contributed to the development of the science of etymology. The *Prātiśākhyas* are referred to by Yāska as *Paraśadani*,¹⁸ while Śākalya, the author of *Padapāṭha* of the *Rgveda* is mentioned by name and his analysis of the Vedic text is questioned in the *Nirukta*.¹⁹

Mainly, the Yāska's *Nirukta* is explained into two categories, namely, the *Nighaṇṭu* and the *Nirukta*. The term *Nighaṇṭu* signifies a collection of important Vedic words. The *Nighaṇṭu*, or *Samāmnāya* as it is called in the beginning of the *Nirukta*, is divided into five chapters and is therefore also called *Pañcādhyāyi*. The first three chapters containing Vedic

17. तदिदं विद्यास्थानं व्याकरणस्य कत्स्य स्वार्थसाधकं च। Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-15.

18. परः सन्निकर्षः संहिता। पदप्रकृतिः संहिता। पदप्रकृतीति सर्वचरणानां पार्षदानि।

Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-17.

19. वन इव। वायो वेः पुत्रः। चायन्निति वा। कामयमान इति वा। चेति च य इति च चकार शाकल्यः। उदात्तं त्वेवमाख्यातमभविष्यम्। असुसमाप्तश्वार्थः। रथर्यतीति सिद्धस्तत्प्रेषुः। रथं कामयत इति वा। एष देवो रथर्यति। इत्यपि निगमो भवति। Ibid., VI-28.

synonyms, are regarded to constitute the *Nigantuka Kāṇḍa*, the fourth chapter which is styled as *Naigama Kāṇḍa* contains a list of such Vedic words whose meaning is not easy to understand and needs to be explained. The fifth chapter called *Daivata Kāṇḍa* is a glossary of the names of Vedic deities.

The word *Nirukta* literally means ‘explanation’ or etymological interpretation of word. So Yāska’s work is entitled as *Nirukta* which is an explanation of the Vedic words listed in the *Nighaṇṭu*. Since it is the only work of its kind available at present, the title *Nirukta* now means the Vedic commentary composed by Yāska. The *Nirukta* which consists of twelve chapters and an appendix, is the earliest systematic commentary on selected words, the *mantras* and the deities of the *Rgveda*.

The Aitihāsika School

The followers of the *Aitihāsika* school of Vedic *mantras* to be related to an *Itihāsa* i.e., a traditional account of ancient events, and interpret the concerned hymn or *mantras* accordingly. The earliest specimens of the *Aitihāsika* interpretation of Vedic *mantras* are seen in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Several legends concerning the legendary interpretation of Vedic *mantras* are found in the *Brāhmaṇa* portions of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*, *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* and *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*. The Vedic and post-Vedic literature having nearly fifty legends, forms the basis of the *Aitihāsika* interpretation of certain hymns of the *Rgveda*. Among them, the legends relating to Indra-Vṛtra, Agastya-Lopāmudrā, Viśvāmitra-Śakti, Yama-Yamī, Saramā-

Paṇi, Urvaśi-Purūravas, Nahuṣa-Sarasvatī, Devāpi-Śantanu, Prajāpati- Duhitṛ, Sudās Paijvana, and Apālā are prominent and well known.

The Parivrājaka School

The *Parivrājaka* school of Vedic interpretations referred to by Yāska,²⁰ which provides a mystic interpretation of the Vedas. According to this school of exegesis, not only those Vedic *mantras* which are considered to be of philosophical importance both by ancient and modern scholars,²¹ but also the other Vedic *mantras* can be interpreted to conform to their mystic ideas.

The earliest specimens of *Parivrājaka* interpretation of the Vedas are seen in the *Brāhmaṇas* as well as in the *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads* too. The followers of *Parivrājaka* school of Vedic exegesis give the mystic interpretation of Vedic deities and sacrifices also. For instance, Mitra and Varuṇa are interpreted as *Prāṇa* (inhalation) and *Apāna* (exhalation) respectively in the prose portion of the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* and many *Brāhmaṇas*.²² But such mystic explanations offered in the *Brāhmaṇas* suffer from inconsistency, as one and the same Vedic *mantra* has been variously interpreted. For instance, the god Indra has been interpreted in the *Brāhmaṇas* as *Vacas*²³ (speech), *Prāṇa*,²⁴

20. बहुप्रजाः कृच्छमापद्यत इति परिव्राजकाः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-8.

21. *Rgveda*, X-72;82; 90 ;121;129, etc
Atharvaveda, XIII and XV etc

Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā, XXXI; XXXII-1-12; XXXIV-1-6, etc.

22. *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, V-3-4,2
Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, III-3-6-9; *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, VI-10-5; IX-8-16
Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, VIII-4-2-6, etc.

23. वाग्वाऽनुष्टुन्वागिन्द्रङ्गदो लोकपृणा न साधयन्यसन्तो। *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* VIII-7-2-6.
सर्वं तस्मादाहुरिन्द्रो वागिति। Ibid, XI-1-6-18.

24. एषऽएवेन्द्रस्थानेष प्रणाभ्युतऽइन्द्रियैन्द्र यदैन्द्र तस्मादिन्द्रङ्गदो हवै तमिन्द्रङ्गत्याचक्षते परोक्षं परोक्षकामा हि देवास्तङ्गदाः सप्त नाना पुरुषानसृजन्त। Ibid., VI-1-1-2
XII-9-1-14; XIV-4-3-19, etc.

*Manah*²⁵ (mind), the Sun,²⁶ *Vāyu*²⁷ etc. Yāska refers to this tendency of *Brāhmaṇas*.²⁸

Naidāna School

Yāska refers to the view of the Naidānas with regard to the etymologies of the word *Syāla* (VI-9), and *Sāman* (VII-12). In his commentary on the *Nirukta* VI-9, *Durgacārya* explains *Naidānah* as *Nidānavidah*, i.e., those who are expert in *Nidāna*. Elsewhere in his commentary *Durgacārya* employs the term *Nidāna* in the sense of primary cause of Vedic mantras to explain *Itihāsa* and thus makes *Nidāna* as the basis of *Itihāsa*.²⁹ But Yāska mentions that *Naidānah* and *Aitiḥāsikah* are separate and different in their approach. The *Naidāna* system of Vedic interpretation is known in name only, and any definite specimen of this system of interpretation is not found.

25 मनवेऽएवेन्द्रः । Ibid., XII-9-1-13.

26 शुक्रो य एष तपत्येष (सूर्य) ऽउऽएवेन्द्रः पुरुषो । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-5-5-7.

27 यो वै वायुः स इद्वो य इन्द्रः स वायुः । Ibid., IV-1-3-19 ; XIV 2-2-6 etc

28 अथापि ब्रह्मणं भवति ।

अनिर्वा इतो वृष्टिं समीरयति धामच्छदिवा खलुवै भूत्वा वर्षति मरुतः सृष्टां वृष्टिं नयन्ति । यदा (खलुवै) आसवादित्योऽग्नि रश्मिभिः पर्यावर्तते थ वर्षति इति । यथो एतद्रोहात् प्रत्यक्षरोहश्चिकीर्षत इत्याम्नायवचनादेतद् भवति । यथो एतदश्वनारीयो द्वादश कपाले भवतीत्यनिर्वचनं कपालानि भवन्ति । अस्ति हि सौर्य एक कपालः पञ्चकपालश्च । यथो एतद् ब्राह्मणं भवतीति बहुभक्तिवादीनि ब्राह्मणानि भवन्ति । प्रथिकी वैश्वानरः । संवत्सरो वैश्वानरः । ब्राह्मणो वैश्वानरः ॥ इति । Yāska, *Nirukta* VII-24.

29 Durgacārya explains *Itihāsa* as based on *Naidāna* (a story explaining the primary cause of composition of a Vedic hymn)
नैदानभूत इति हैवम् आसीदिति य उच्यते स इतिहासः । Durga on *Nirukta*, II-10
तत्र इमं निदानभूतम् इतिहासम् आचक्षते इति आचार्याः । Ibid., II-24

Anukramaṇīs

In the field of R̄gvedic studies a class of writing called *Anukramaṇīs* or Vedic indices, occupy a very prominent place. They provide lists of the hymns, their seers, metres and the deities in the order in which they appear in the *R̄gveda Samhitā*. These *Anukramaṇīs* were prepared with a view to preserving the original text of the *R̄gveda*.

Śaunaka and Kātyāyana are authors of separate works of *Anukramaṇīs*. Seven *Anukramaṇīs* are attributed to Śaunaka. The *Ārṣānukramaṇī* gives a list of the *R̄ṣis* of the *R̄gveda*. The *Chandonukramaṇī* enumerates the metres in which the hymns of the *R̄gveda* are. It also mentions the number in each *Maṇḍala* of mantras in each metres as well as the aggregate in all metres. The *Anuvākānukramaṇī* gives the initial words of each of the eighty-five *Anuvākas*, into which the *R̄gveda Samhitā* is divided and the number of hymns contained in these *Anuvākas*. It also states that the *R̄gveda* contains 1017 *sūktas*, 10,580 *R̄ks*, 153826 words and 432000 syllables. The *Pādānukramaṇī* gives an index of lines of the *R̄gveda*. The *Sūktānukramaṇī*, which is not available, probably consisted only of the initial words (*Pratikas*) of the hymns. The *Devatānukramaṇī*, of which only ten quotations are preserved in Śadguruśisya's commentary on the *Sarvānukramaṇī*, probably consisted of an index of gods.

The *Sarvānukramaṇī* attributed to Kātyāyana, deals with all the data contained in the *Anukramaṇīs* within a compass of a single work. It gives the initial words of every hymn in the *R̄gveda*, a number of its mantras, the seers, the deities, and the



metres even of single *mantra*. Another work, namely the *Rgvidhāna*, attributed to Śaunaka, deals with the magical effects, produced by the recitation of *sūktas*, or single *mantra* of the *Rgveda*.

ii. Commentators on the *Rgveda* :

Skandaswāmi :

The oldest commentary on the *Rgveda* is of Skandaswāmin. In the colophon at the end of *Rgvedabhbāṣya* of each *Adhyāya*, he informs that his native place was Vallabhi and the son of Bhartrdhruva.³⁰ Most of scholars identify Vallabhi as a town in North Gujarat. Hariswāmi, in his commentary on *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states that Skandaswāmi was a his teacher.³¹ Most of the scholars opine that Hariswāmi's date to be 639 A.D. So, Skandaswāmi may be said to have lived in the beginning of the seventh century A.D.

According to Skandaswāmi, the knowledge of *Rṣi* and *Devatā* is very necessary for the understanding of *mantras*. He does not take the metre as necessary in understanding the meaning of a *mantra*. In the beginning of each hymn, he mentions the *Rṣi* and

30. वल्लभीविनिवास्येतामृगर्थागम संहितम्।

भर्तु द्युवसुतश्चक्रे स्कन्दस्वामी यथास्मृतिः॥

Skandaswāmi, Colophon at the end of each *Adhyāya*

Ed. C.Kunhan Raja, University of Madras, 1935.

31. तन्नन्दनो हरिस्वामि प्रस्पुरद्वेदिमान्।

त्रयीव्याख्यानधौरैयोऽधीततन्नो गुरोमुखात्॥

यः साम्राट् कृतवान् सप्तसोमसंस्थास्थतर्थक्षेत्रस्मृतिम्।

व्याख्यां कृत्वाद्यापयन्मा श्रीस्कन्दस्वाम्यस्ति मे गुरुः॥

Hariswāmi, Q. *Treatment of Nature in the Rgveda*, Dr. Braj Bihari Chaubey, Vedic Sāhitya Sadan, Hoshiarpur. 1970, p-15.

Devatā thereof, and substantiates by quoting the statements. In his commentary, he has followed the *Yājñikas* method of interpretation. Hence his commentary may be called *Adhiyajñaparāka*. He has also followed the path of the *Nairuktas* in the interpretation of certain *mantras*. Hence his commentary at times, has become *Adhidaivataparāka*. Skandaswāmi has frequently quoted the passages from the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas* in support of his interpretation. But unfortunately his commentary is not available in its entirety. Only some portions dealing with *Rgveda* I-1-1 to I-56-1; I-62-1 to I-121-15 and V-57-1 to VI-75-6 are available.

Nārāyaṇa and Udgītha

Nārāyaṇa and Udgītha were contemporaries of Skandaswāmi. Nārāyaṇa had commented on the sixth and seventh *Aṣṭaka*, while Udgītha on the remaining eighth *Aṣṭaka*. But Nārāyaṇa's commentary is not available. Only some portions of Udgītha's commentary on *Rgveda* X-5-4 to X-12-5, X-13-2 to X-52-3 and X-62-9 to X-83-6 are available. The available portions of the Udgītha's commentary are similar in the treatment of subject matter to that of Skandaswāmi.

Mādhava Bhaṭṭa.

The personality of Mādhava Bhaṭṭa is much controversial. Some identify him with Veṅkaṭa Mādhava, from the fact that Veṅkaṭa Mādhava mentions Mādhava Bhaṭṭa as a commentator and places him before Skandaswāmi; so it may be presumed that he preceded Skandaswāmi, though the latter has not mentioned the name of former. From the colophons of his

commentary, ग्रामे जातो गोमति व्याचकार।³² it is evident that he was an inhabitant of the village Gomān on the south bank of the river Kāverī in Choḷa country in Dakṣinapatha. His commentary is very brief and therein passages from the *Nighaṇṭu*, the *Nitukta* and the *Brāhmaṇas* are quoted. His commentary is not available in its entirety. Only some portions of it have been published.

Venkaṭa Mādhava

The first writer who has given a complete commentary on the *R̥gveda*, is Venkaṭa Mādhava. He lived during tenth century A.D. In the colophons of his commentary, he has given enough information about himself. His father is Venkaṭārya and mother Sundarī. His grand-father is Mādhava. He belongs to the gotra *Kauśika*. He claims his commentary to be very brief and concise. In his commentary he has followed *Aṣṭaka* division. According to him, the meanings of the *mantras*, is not clear, and they can only be explained the *Brāhmaṇic* lore. He, who is well-versed in the *Nitukta* and *Vyākaraṇa*, knows only one-fourth of the *R̥gveda*. Besides his commentary too, may be regarded as *Adhiyajñaparāka*.

Ānanda Tīrtha

Ānanda Tīrtha alias Mādhvācarya, who flourished during 12th cent. A.D. and founder of the *Dvaita* school of *Vedānta*, has interpreted first forty hymns of the *R̥gveda*. According to him, the main god whom the *mantras* vividly describe, is Nārāyaṇa. Thus his commentary may be called *Nārāyaṇaparāka* or *Bhagavatparāka*.

32. Mādhava Baṭṭa, *R̥gvedavyākhyā*, Colophon at the end of the *Aṣṭaka* I, *Adhyāya* 2, ed. C . Kunhan Raja, Adyar Library, 1937.

Ātmānanda

He has interpreted only one *sūkta*, viz., *Asyavāmiya Sūkta*. Due to his being a follower of Śaṅkara, his commentary is greatly influenced by *Advaita* philosophy. He claims his commentary be called *Ādhyatmaparāka*. His commentary refers to some commentators of the *R̥gveda*, whose commentaries are not available.

Sāyaṇa

Sāyaṇācārya occupies a unique place in the history of Sanskrit literature. Sāyaṇa's works that have come down to us, are the most important repositories of Vedic lore. This great scholar of academic affairs was simultaneously a great man of letters, a very rare combination even among the ancients.

Sāyaṇa was born in a learned South Indian Brāhmaṇa family. His father was Māyaṇa and his mother Srīmatī. His 'Gōtra' was 'Bhāradvāja', *Sūtra Baudhāyana*. He belonged to the *Taittirīya Śākha* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*.

Sāyaṇa had two brothers, Mādhavācārya and Bhogaṇātha. Mādhavācārya was the eldest one and Bhogaṇātha, the youngest.

Mādhavācārya says that his mother was Srīmati, his father was the famous Māyaṇa and his two uterine brothers were Sāyaṇa and Bhogaṇātha (who apeared to be) his mind and intelligence.³³

33. श्रीमती जननीयस्य सुकीर्तिमर्यणः पिता ।
सायणो भोगनाथश्च मनोबृद्धि सहोदरौ ॥
यस्य बोधायनं सूत्रं शाखा यस्य च याजुषी ।

भारद्वाजं कुलं जन्म सर्वज्ञः स हि माथवः ॥

Parāśarasṛṣṭi Vyākyā, Prasthāvana, VV-6-7

Cp. Dr. K. Krishnamurthy, *Sāyaṇa's Subhāṣita-Sudhānidhi*, Karnatak University, Dharwad, 1968. Introduction p.2

Mādhavācāry is known as 'Vidyāraṇya' bearing the burden of sovereignty of Vijayanagara kingdom and as one of the greatest commentators also. When the Mādhavācārya was the minister of Harihara-I and Bukka-I to begin with, his younger brother Sāyaṇa held the high post of chief minister of Kampana who ruled over the Telagu region of the Nellur district. Sāyaṇa continued ruling Nellore as late as the year 1364-65 A.D.; for an inscription of his date at the city of Nellore still states that "Śrīman Māhamāṇḍaleśvara Vīra Śrī Sāyaṇṇa odayalu was ruling the earth."³⁴ During the period of twelve years from 1364 to 1376 A.D. was the highest position of his political life. Sāyaṇa was the minister of four Vijayanagar kings namely Bukka-I, Kampana, Saṅgama II and Harihara-II. This is made evident in the colophons of his works. Thus in some of commentaries on the Vedas, he styles himself the minister of Bukka-I.³⁵ In his *Subhāṣita-Sudhānidhi* he calls himself the minister of Kamparāja.³⁶ In his

34. Translation from Telugu : Hail, on Friday the 5th of the dark fortnight of Mārgaśīra of the year Krodhi correspondint to the year 1286 of the illustrious Śaka era, while Śrīman Māhamāṇḍaleśvara Vīra Śrī Sāyaṇṇa (it may be Sāyaṇa) odayalu was rulling the enrth, the people of all countries came to agreement in connection with the Friday market established by Kanchanagaru in Nellore.

Alan Buttern worth and V.Venugopal Chetty. *A collection of the inscriptions of copper plates and stones in the Nellore district*, part-II. Government press, Madras,1905. P-847.

35. इत्यं श्रीबुक्कभूपालसाम्राज्यैवद्युरन्धरः।
विद्यातीर्थं गुरोर्दुष्ट्या प्राप्सार्वज्यवैभवः॥

श्रीमत्सायणमन्त्रीशः सकलागम तत्ववित्।

दाशतयां माधवीयो वेदार्थस्य प्रकाशने॥ *Rgveda* with Sāyaṇa's commentary,
Vaidika Samśodhana Maṇḍala, Poona, 1976, Vol.II, p.718

36. मतिमास्तस्य राज्ञो भूत् मन्त्री मायणसायणः।
यन्मन्त्रेण न सर्पन्ति नित्यं शत्रुविलेषयाः॥

Dr. K. Krishnamurthy, Introduction to *Subhāṣita-Sudhānidhi*, p.4

*Dhātuvṛtti*³⁷ and *Alaṅkāra-Sudhānidhi*, he was the minister of Saṅgama II. In his commentaries on the Śatapatha, Tattiriya Brāhmaṇas³⁸ he calls himself the minister of Harihara-II.

Sāyaṇa's *Vedārtha Prakāśa*, a commentary on the *Rgveda*, contains a very scholarly introduction. In this commentary, he has explained each and every word of text. He has pointed out all grammatical and accentual peculiarities, giving etymologies of difficult and new words. And at the same time he explains liturgical application of each and every *mantra*. At the beginning of each *sūkta*, before commencing to explain the actual text, he mentions the name of the sacrifice, or the offering at which the *sūkta* or its *mantras* are to be recited. He regards the knowledge of deity and metre as necessary appendage to the understanding of the true sense of the *mantras*. He frequently refers to the passages from the *Sarvānukramaṇi* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* in support of his view. Passages from the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas* are also found quoted frequently. He explains the Vedic myths in the light of Purāṇic ideas by which he was very much influenced.

37. तेन मायणपुत्रेण सायमेन मनीषिणा ।

आख्य माधवीये धातुवृत्तिर्विरच्यते ॥

इति पूर्वपश्चिम समुद्राधीश्वर कम्पराजसुत संगम महाराज-महामन्त्रिणा मायणसुतेन माधवसहोदरेण सायणाचार्येण विरचितायां माधवीयायां धातुवृत्तौ ॥

Beginning and Colophone of *Dhātuvṛtti*, Ed. A. Mahadeva Shastry and K.Rangacārya, Govt. of Oriental library, Series Bibliotheca Saṁskrita, No.23

38. इति श्रीमद्राजाधिराज परमेश्वर वैदिकमार्ग प्रवर्तक श्री वीर हरिहर भूपाल साम्राज्यधुरस्थर सायणाचार्यविरचिते माधवीये वेदार्थप्रकाशे कृष्णयजुर्वेदीय तैत्तीरीय ब्राह्मण भाष्ये तृतीयः काण्डः समाप्तः ॥

2. Geo-historical Elements in the *Rgveda*

The *Rgveda* is the earliest extant record of the Aryan activities ; it however helps us with rich information to read their early settlements in India and give us clue to their gradual expansion in different directions in India. The topographic map of R̄gvedic India displays conspicuously the primary features of river basins and the adjoining mountains. On the basis of the Vedic references, it may be concluded that mountains had much less influence as compared to those of the rivers which were intimately associated with the R̄gvedic Aryan activities and settlements.

i. Rivers :

Topography of Sindhu River System

The *Rgveda* is familiar with the whole of the Sindhu river system. Regional unity of the R̄gvedic India was a great contribution of the rivers, which provided easy accessibility and convenient land to live upon. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* refers to a set of seven rivers flowing westward.¹ Those seven rivers flowing to the west were the Sindhu system.

Sindhu² called Indus by virtue of its vastness, was the main river of the R̄gvedic India. Its basin was formed, as it is formed

1. अथ याः सप्त प्रतीच्यः स्ववन्ति । सोऽरण्येऽनूच्यः सः सप्त कपालो भवति सप्त हि याः प्रतीच्या स्ववन्ति सोऽस्यैषोऽवाङ् प्राणाऽएतस्य प्रजापतेः सोऽरण्येऽनूच्यो भवति । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IX-3-1-2

2. 'Sindhu in the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* often means "Stream" merely (Cf. *Sapta-Sindhavaḥ*) but it has also the more exact sense of the "the stream" *par excellance*, 'the Indus'. The name is, however rarely mentioned after the period of the *Samhitās*, always then occurring in such a way as to suggest distance. The horses from the Indus (*Saindhava*) were famous'.

Keith and Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1995, Vols. I&II, p.450

even now, by a number of rivers discharging into it from east and west. The *Nadīstuti Sūkta* in the *Rgveda* says that :

"Accept this my praise, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Śutudrī, Paruṣṇī, Marudvṛdhā with Asiknī and Vitastā ; listen, Ārjikiya with Suṣomā.

You, Sindhu, in order to reach swift-moving Gomati, have united yourself first with the Trṣṭamā : now be united with the Susartu, the Rasā, the Śvetī, the Kubhā and the Mehatnu, in conjunction with which streams you advance."³

Sindhu :

The river Sindhu is frequently mentioned in the *Rgveda*. It is described as the mightiest river receiving huge volume of water from a number of tributaries. On the basis of its rapid and voluminous flow of water, the river has been mentioned as surpassing all moving bodies.⁴ Its roaring sound went upto the heavens, it was unconquerable, crystal clear and resembled a youthful woman with a superb figure.⁵ It was majestic and vast in expansion and used to run on a 'path of gold.'⁶ Tributaries

3. इमं मे गङ्गे यमुने सरस्वति शुशुद्रि स्तोमं सचता परूष्णाया ।

असिक्लिया मरुद्धृष्टे वितस्तयार्जीकीये श्रुणुह्ना सुषोमया ॥ *Rgveda*, X-75-5

तृष्णामया प्रथमं यातवे सजूः सुसत्त्वा रसया श्वेत्या त्या ।

त्वं सिन्धो कुभया गोमतीं क्रुमुं मेहन्त्वा सरथं याभिरीयसे ॥ *Rv.* X-75-6

4. प्र तेऽरद्धरुणो यातवे पथः सिन्धो यद्वाजौ अभ्यद्रवस्त्वम् ।

भूम्या अधि प्रवता यासि सानुना यदेषामग्रं जगतामिरज्यसि ॥ *Rv.* X-75-2

5. दिवि स्वनो यतते भूम्योपर्यनन्तं शुभ्मुदियर्ति भानुना ।

अभ्रदिव प्र स्तनयन्ति वृष्टयः सिन्धुयदिति वृषभो न रोरुवत् ॥ *Rv.* X-75-3

अभि त्वा सिन्धो शुशुमिन्न मातरो वाश्रा अर्षन्ति पयसेव धेनवः । *Rv.* X-75-4

6. उतस्या श्वेतयावरी वह्निः वां नदीनाम् ।

सिन्धुहिरण्यवर्तनिः ॥ *Rv.* VIII-26-18

rushed up very anxiously 'to meet the Sindhu'⁷ due to considerable difference in level.

The Sindhu is the present Indus river. It is receiving the water from number of rivers. So, it is called sea (Sindhu). "It is important to note that the Sindhu assumed a different course from the present one in its lower valley. It has been changing its course gradually from east to west due to two physical causes : firstly, the rotation of the earth which causes the Indus like all other rivers flowing north-south in the northern hemisphere, to erode its right bank constantly; and secondly, the aggression of sand from the south and south-east has been forcing the river to migrate westward. A topographic study of the lower Indus region confirms the above fact. The present day surface of Sindhu (in Pakistan) is dissected by a number of channels which for the greater part of the year remain dry. Many of them have now been utilised as irrigation channels. It is proved that they were once occupied by the Indus and its deltaic distributaries."⁸

Sarasvatī :

The main clue to the geography is provided by the river Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī is used in two forms. Firstly, as a river, in praise of which many sūktās are found in the *Rgveda*. Secondly, as a great deity, whose name has been given to the goddess of learning. Sarasvatī has been described in detail in one exclusive

7. राजेव युध्वा नयसि त्वमित्सिचौ यदासामग्रं पवतामिनक्षसि ॥ *Rv. X-75-4*

8. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, Grantham, Rambag, Kanpur-12, 1976, p-6

hymn in the *Rgveda*.⁹ It is described in superlatives. It is called 'Nadītamā', "the best of the rivers."¹⁰ It was regarded as the seventh largest river of the *Sapta-Sindhu* region. It is described as "pure in her course from mountains to the ocean"¹¹ and having 'limitless unbroken flood,' 'swift moving rapid rush and coming with tempestuous roar'.¹² Sarasvatī springs from a "three-fold source" and the five tribes derive their prosperity from it.¹³ Sarasvatī must be a long river, because the banks of which are said to be inhabited by many kings.¹⁴ It also has a number of tributaries themselves "strongly flowing", with Sarasvatī as the seventh. It is 'Sindhumaṭā' (the mother of rivers).¹⁵ The Sarasvatī with its tributary Drṣadvatī and Āpayā, are marked in the *Rgveda*.¹⁶ In addition, it is 'Saptasvasā', 'seven sistered'.¹⁷ These must be the 'Sapta-Sindhavah' that 'seek the seas'.¹⁸

Besides *Rgveda*, the later Vedic texts contain descriptions that are inconsistent with the above. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*

9. *Rgveda*, VI-61

10. अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति । *Rv.* II-41-16

11. एकाचेतत्सरस्वती नदीनां शचिर्यती गिरिभ्यः आ समुद्रात् । *Rv.* VIII-95-2

12. यस्या अनन्तो अहृतस्त्वेषश्चरिष्णुरर्णवः ।

अमश्चरति रोरुवत् ॥ *Rv.* VI-61-8

13. त्रिष्ठस्था सप्तधातुः पञ्च जाता वर्धयन्ती । *Rv.* VI-61-12

14. चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु । *Rv.* VIII-21-18

15. आ यत्साकं यशसो वावशानाः सरस्वती सप्तथी सिञ्चुमाता । *Rv.* VII-36-6

16. दृषद्वत्यां मानुषा आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदने दिदीहि । *Rv.* III-23-4

17. उत नः प्रिया प्रियासु सप्तस्वसा सुजुष्टा । *Rv.* VI-61-10

18. समुद्रं न स्वतः सप्त यह्वीः । *Rv.* I-71-7

(25-10-1), *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* (IV-26-12) and the associated *Śrauta Sūtras* say that Sarasvatī disappears in the desert lands at a place called 'Vināśana'. So, this is called weakling river 'Vināśanā Sarasvatī'.¹⁹ The *Manusmṛti* informs that the Sarasvatī had ceased to reach the sea by that time by disappearing at a place called 'Vināśana'.²⁰ A study of maps reveals the existence of a dry-bed (Ghaggar) of a mighty river which appears to be the R̄gvedic Sarasvatī. The Sarasvatī of the R̄gvedic times may be identified with the present Saruti or Sarasvatī which rises from the Siwalik hills in the Sirmur.²¹ The R̄gvedic Aryans develop their culture on the banks of the river Sarasvatī. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* reveals its sanctity and the importance narrating that the Aryan culture, i.e fire worship, spread to eastern India from the banks of the Sarasvatī.²² Thus, the river Sarasvatī recalls the centre of R̄gvedic Aryan culture.

Dṛśadvatī : Dṛśadvatī is frequently mentioned with the Sarasvatī.²³ It is shown that it flows in the nearness of the Sarasvatī into which discharged its water.²⁴ The Sarasvatī and

19. चतुश्चत्वारिंशदाश्विनानि सरस्वत्या विनाशनात् प्लाक्षः प्रास्ववण स्तावद् इतः स्वर्गो लोकः सरस्वतीसम्मितेना ध्वनास्वर्ग लोकं यन्ति। *Pañcaviniśa Brāhmaṇa*, 25-10-16

Ed. A. Chinnaswami Shastri, Haridasa Sanskrit Series, Benaras, 1936

20. हिमवद्विद्ययोर्मध्यं यत्याग्विनशनादपि।

प्रत्यगेव प्रयागच्छ मध्यदेशः प्रकीर्तिः॥ *Manusmṛti*, Tr.- Chakrakodi Ishwar Shastray, Samaja Pustakalaya, Dharwad, 1969, p.30

21. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p.8

22. तर्हि विदेशो माथव आस। सरस्वत्यां स तत एव प्राङ्गदहन्त्र भियायेमां प्रथिवीं तं गोतमश्च राहुगणो विदेशच माथवः पश्चाद्वृहत्नवीयतुः। स इमाः सर्वा नदीरति ददाह सदानीरेत्युत्तरादग्निरेन्द्रिविति तां हैव नातिददाह। तां ह स्म तां पुरा ब्रह्मणा न तरनत्यनतिदग्धानिना वैश्वानरेणेति॥ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-4-1-14

23. दृशद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दिदीहि। *R̄gveda*, III-23-4

24. *Pañcaviniśa Brāhmaṇa*, 25-10-13,14

Dṛśadvatī doab was a vast and sufficiently open land adjoining the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab. The Dṛśadvatī appears to be the present stream which rises in the hills east of Bilaspur and continues to south-west through eastern Ambala, Karnal and southern Hissar districts passing by east of Thanesar and west of Jind. After crossing the Hissar district, it enters the northern part of Bikaner territory and passed by Bhadra and Nohar, beyond which it assumes north-western direction until it meets the Sarasvatī above Suratgarh.²⁵

Āpayā :

The Āpayā²⁶ is mentioned between the Dṛśadvatī and the Sarasvatī. This river must have been the small tributary of the Sarasvatī.

Śutudrī :

Śutudrī is associated with the Vipāśā river.²⁷ In the post-Vedic period, the name of this river appears transformed to Śatadru 'flowing in a hundred channels'. Śutudrī is the present Sutlej which flows in Punjab. The Sutlej has changed its course very considerably within historical times.²⁸

Vipāśā :

Vipāśā is freely mentioned twice in the *Rgveda*.²⁹ Yāska tells in the *Nirukta*, that its earlier name was *Urunjira*. The word

25. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p-10

26. दृशद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दिदीहि। *Rgveda*, III-23-4

27. प्र पर्वतानामुशति उपस्थाप्तश्वे इव विषिते हासमाने।

गावेव शुभ्रे मातरा रिहाणे विपाट्छुतुद्री पयसा जवेते ॥ *Rv.* III-33-1

28. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-385

29. अच्छा सिन्धुं मातृतमामयासं विपाशमुकीं सुभगामगम्।

वत्समिव मातरा संरिहाणे समानं योनिमनुं संचरन्ती ॥ *Rv.* III-33-3

एतदस्या अनः शये सुसंपिष्टं विपाश्या।

ससार सीं परावतः ॥ *Rv.* IV-30-11

'Vipāśā' means 'releaser of cords' (*vi*-without, *Pāśa*-cords).³⁰ A legend regarding this, is found in the *Mahābhārata*.³¹

Paruśnī :

Paruśnī is mentioned in the *Nadīstuti*³² and in the song of Sudās.³³ It was an important river of the Rgvedic times. King Sudās, the chief of the Trtsu tribe while marching on war against Kutsa, the king of Purus, could cross it only with the help of Indra who is said to have made it shallow by diverting its water into other channels. Purus failed to cross it and lost a large number of soldiers. A *mantra* in the eighth *maṇḍala* of the *Rgveda*, calls it a 'great stream' (महेनदी).³⁴ It is rolled down swiftly creating wool like waves vapour.³⁵ It is identified with the present Rāvi, which flows in the Punjab. During the Vedic times, this river probably discharged its water into the combined course of the Asiknī and Vitastā, a few miles below Multan.³⁶

Asiknī :

In order, this river is mentioned after Paruśnī in the *Nadīstuti* hymn.³⁷ According to Yāska, the meaning of the word Asiknī is

30. विपाशि विमुक्तपाशि । Yāska, *Nirukta*, XI-48.

31. उत्तार ततः पाशैर्विमुक्तः स महानृषिः ।

विपाशेति च नामस्या नद्याश्चक्रे महानृषिः ॥ *Mahābhārata, Ādiparva*, 167-8, Pub. Svādyāya Maṇḍala, Paradi, 1968

32. *Rv. X-75-5.*

33. दुराद्योऽ अदितिं स्त्रेवयन्तोऽवेतसो वि जगृभे परूष्णीम् ।
माहाविव्यक्षुष्ठिर्वी पत्यमानः पशुष्कविरशयच्चायमानः ॥ *Rv. VII-18-8*
ईत्युरर्थं न न्यर्थं परूष्णीमाशुश्वनेदभिपित्वं जगाम ।

सुदास इन्द्रः सुतुकाँ अमित्रानरन्धयन्मानुषे वधिवाचः ॥ *Rv. VII-18-9*

34. सत्यमित्वा महेनदी परूष्णयव देदिशम् । *Rv. VIII-74-15*

35. श्रीये परूष्णीमुषमाण ऊर्णा यस्याः पार्वाणि सख्याय विव्ये ॥ *Rv. IV-22-2*

36. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p-11

37. *Rv. X-75-5*

black.³⁸ This river is also mentioned along with Sindhu in a hymn of the eighth *maṇḍala* of the the *R̥gveda*.³⁹ The Asiknī later came to be known as *Candrabhāgā*, and now this name of the river is known as Chanab flowing in Panjab.

Marudvṛdhā :

The river Marudvṛdhā is mentioned after Asiknī. Yāska suggests that it should be taken as an epithet of all the rivers because all swollen (*Vṛdhah*) by rainy winds (Maruts).⁴⁰ Here, Marudvṛdhā is the proper name of a river like those of other rivers. It is a small Kashmiri stream flowing from north to south which joins the Chanab on its northern bank at Kistvar.

Vitastā :

Another river mentioned in the *Nadīstuti* hymn is the Vītastā (*Rv.X 75-5*). It is the most westerly of the five rivers of the Punjab. The name was later corrupted to Bihat and its modern name outside Kashmir is Jhelam.

Ārjikiyā :

This river referred to in the *Nadīstuti* hymn, has been identified by Yāska with the Vipās or Beas.⁴¹ But P.L. Bhargava has identified it as the Hāro,⁴² an eastern tributary of the Indus in the north-west of the Jhelam; and the mountain from which this

38. असीक्यशुक्लासिता । सितमिति वर्णनाम । तत्रतिषेदोऽसितम् । Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-26.

39. यत्सिन्धौ यदसिक्यां यत्समुद्रेषु मरुतः सुबर्हिषः । *Rv.* VIII-20-25

40. मरुद्वधाः सर्वा नद्यो मरुत एना वर्धयन्ति । Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-26.

41. आर्जीकीयां विपाडित्याहुः । ऋजीकप्रभव वा । ऋजुगामिनी वा । Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX- 26.

42. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*. D.K. Printworld (p) Ltd., New Delhi, 2001, p-78.

river rises may be known as Ārjika, which is mentioned twice in the *Rgveda*.

Suṣomā :

Suṣomā is mentioned soon after the Ārjikīyā in the *Nadīstuti* hymn of the *Rgveda*. This is another river which is identified by Yāska with the Sindhu.⁴³ This river is referred to in another hymn also.⁴⁴ Suṣomā must be identified with the modern Sohān. It is an eastern tributary of the Indus flowing towards south of the Hāro.

Trṣṭāmā :

The *Nadīstuti* hymn mentions this river Trṣṭāmā. It is also western tributary of the Sindhu. The R̄gvedic Trṣṭāmā was, therefore, in all probability identical with the Gilgit.

Susartu and Rasā :

These two rivers are mentioned just after the Trṣṭāmā, in a *mantra* of the *Nadīstutis*. The Rasā is mentioned in another *mantra*⁴⁵ also along with the western tributaries of the Sindhu. It may therefore, be identified with the river Pañjśir flowing to the South of the Hindukush range. The Susartu may be identical with the river Ghorband.

Kubhā and Śvetī :

The Kubhā is mentioned in the *Nadīstuti* hymn, and also mentioned in a hymn of the fifth *mandala* of the *Rgveda*.⁴⁶ It is

43. सुषोम सिन्धुः। यदेनाभिस्ववन्ति नद्यः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-26.

44. अयं ते शर्याणावति सुषोमयमधि प्रियः। *Rv.* VIII-64-11

45. मावो रसानितभा कुभा कुमुर्मा वः सिन्धुर्विं रीरमत्। *Rv.* V-53-9

46. *Ibid.*

identical with the modern Kābul river. The Śveti may be identified with Kunar, a tributary of the river Kābul.

Krumu and Mehatnu :

The Krumu is mentioned with the Kubhā, in the *Rgveda*.⁴⁷ This is identical with the modern Kurum. The river Mehatnu is mentioned along with the Krumu in the *Nadīstuti*. Identification of this Mehatnu river with a river of modern age is difficult. Rather, it may be regarded as an independent tributary of Sindhu.

Gomati :

This river is mentioned in the *Nadīstuti* hymn and in the eighth *maṇḍala* of the *Rgveda*.⁴⁸ It is identical with the modern Gomal. It is the last among the western tributaries of the Sindhu.

Rākā and Bṛahaddivā :

These two rivers are mentioned with the Sarasvatī in a hymn of the *Rgveda*.⁴⁹ These must have been tributaries of the Sarasvatī. The Rākā was probably the modern Rāksī and Bṛahaddivā may be regarded as flowing parallel to the Rākā.

Suvāstu :

The river Suvāstu is mentioned only once in the *Rgveda*.⁵⁰ The word Suvāstu, signifying "fair dwellings", indicates that there was an Rgvedic Aryan settlement along its banks. It is identical

47. RV. X-75-6; V-53-9

48. एषो अपश्रितो वलोगोमतीमव तिष्ठति । RV. VIII-24-30

49. सरस्वती बृहद्दिवोत गुका दशस्यन्तीर्वर्वस्यन्तु शुभ्राः । RV. V-42-12

50. उत मे प्रयियोर्वयियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुगवनी । RV. VIII-19-37

with the modern Swāt, which flows to the east of Pañjkora and unites with the Kābul river.

Anitabhā :

In between the Rasā and the Kubhā, this river is mentioned only once in the *Rgveda*.⁵¹ It is identified with the river Alingar, a tributary of the Kābul, or Kubhā.

Gaurī :

The river Gaurī is mentioned twice in the *Rgveda*. In one *mantra*⁵² Gaurī is described in a picturesque way : as cutting its stream into several channels so as to appear desirous of having one, two, four, eight or nine feet and to be creating a thousand sounds in the atmosphere. The other *mantra*⁵³ describes *Soma* as growing in the valley of river Gaurī. The Gaurī river may be identified with modern Pañjakora which combines with Swāt, flowing to the east, then joins the Kābul river.

Sarayū :

Sarayū is mentioned three times in the *Rgveda*. It is described as a mighty river with *Sindhu* and *Sarasvati*.⁵⁴ Sarayū appears in another *mantra* with Rasā, Anitabhā, Krumu and Kubhā.⁵⁵ Citraratha and Arṇa are defeated apparently by the

51. मावो रसानितभा कुभा क्रमुर्मा वः सिन्धुर्नि रीरमत् । *Rv.* V-53-9

52. गौरिर्मिमाय सलिलानि तक्षत्योकपदी द्विपदी सा चतुष्पदी ।

अष्टापदी नवपदी वभूवुषी सहस्राक्षरा परमे व्योमन् ॥ *Rv.* I-64-41

53. सोमो गौरी अधिश्वितः । *Rv.* IX-12-3

54. सरस्वती सरयुः सिन्धुर्मिभिर्महो महीरवसा यनु वक्षणीः । *Rv.* X-64-9

55. मावो रसानितभा कुभा क्रमुर्मा वह सिन्धुर्नि रीरमत् ।

मा वः परिष्ठात्सरयुः पुरिशिण्यस्मे इत्सुन्मस्तु वः ॥ *Rv.* V-53-9

Turvaśa and Yadus who crossed the Sarayū.⁵⁶ Sarayū is identified with modern Sarju of Uttara Pradesh. But Keith and Macdonell in the *Vedic Index*⁵⁷ record that Sarayū be identified with Krumu or with the united course of the Śutudri (Satlej) and Vipās (Beas), which are the east bank tributaries. *Rgveda* states "Let not the Rasā, the Anitabhā, the Kubhā, or the wide-roving ocean delay you: let not the watery Sarayū oppose you : may the happiness of your (approach) be ours.."⁵⁸

Topography of Gaṅgā River System : This system implies in the statement of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. It says that "some rivers flow to the east from the white mountain".⁵⁹ The rivers of this system are not many. They have been referred to separately.

The river Gaṅgā is mentioned only once in the *Rgveda*, i.e., in the *Nadīstuti*.⁶⁰ Later Vedic works supply some clues to this river. The banks of Gaṅgā were associated with the victories of the Bharatās.⁶¹ It is mentioned with Yamunā.⁶² The doab of these two rivers was inhabited by honorable people.⁶³

Yamunā : Yamunā is mentioned thrice in the *Rgveda*. Its banks were rich in kine and steeds.⁶⁴ The Aryan king Sudās defeated

56. उत त्या सद्य आर्या सरयोरिन्द्र पारतः । अर्णाचित्ररथवधीः *Rv.* IV-30-18

57. Kieth and Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-344

58. मावो रसानितभा कुभा क्रमुर्मा वह सिन्धुनि रीरमत् ।

मा वः परिष्ठात्सरयुः पुरिशिष्यस्मे इत्सुममस्तु वः ॥ *Rv.* V-53-9

59. एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रसासने गार्णी प्राच्योऽन्या नद्यः स्यदन्ते श्वेतेभ्यः पर्वतेभ्यः ।

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, III-8-9, Tr. Swami Mādhavānanda, Advait Ashrama, Culkatta, 1993.

60. *Rv.* X-75-5

61. एतद्विष्णोः क्रान्तं तेन हैतेन भरतो दौऽश्वन्तिरीजे तेनेष्टवेमां व्यष्टीं व्यानशे येय भरतानां तदेतद् गातयाऽभिगीतमष्टासप्तीं भरतो दौऽश्वन्तिर्यमुना मनु गङ्गायां वृत्त्वे बद्नात्पञ्चाशताँ हयानिति । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 13-5-4-11.

62. *Aitereya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII-23.

63. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, II-20.

64. यमुनायामधि श्रुतमुद्राधो गब्बं मृजे नि राधो अश्वं मृजे ॥ *Rv.* V-52-17

the non-Aryan King Bheda on the bank of Yamunā.⁶⁵ Later, it has been respectfully associated with the Gaṅgā.

The other rivers mentioned in the *Rgveda* are : the Siphā, the Añjasī, the Kuliśī,⁶⁶ the Vibhālī, the Vitasthānā,⁶⁷ the Yavyāvati,⁶⁸ the Prayiyu, the Vayiyu,⁶⁹ the Śvetayāvari,⁷⁰ the Amśumati⁷¹ and the Aśmāvati.⁷² These rivers are known just by the name, but cannot be identified with any certainty.

ii. MOUNTAINS

The mountains had much less influence as compared to the rivers which were intimately associated with the Rgvedic Aryan activities and the Aryan settlements. The Aryans being inhabited the mountainous region as also the plain region is clear from the references in the *Rgveda*. The word *Parvata* or *Giri* is used in the sense of 'hill' or 'mountain'. The legend of the mountains having wings may be referred to the fast moving clouds.⁷³ It also indicates the terrestrial mountains.⁷⁴ The concept of the mountains as untouched by time,⁷⁵ points perhaps to the ignorance of the Aryans of the process of erosion by natural agents.

Himavanta : A common term 'Himavanta' or 'Himavat' is frequently used for a mountain. Himavanta in the Northern

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- 65. आवदिन्द्रं यमुना तृत्सवश्च प्रात्रं भेदं सर्वताता मुषायत् । *Rv.* VII-18-19
 - 66. क्षीरेण स्नातः कुवयः योषे हते ते स्यातां प्रवणे शिफायः । *Rv.* I-104-3
अञ्जसि कुलिशी वीरपलि पयो हिन्वाना अधभिर्भरत्ते । *Rv.* I-104-4
 - 67. उत सिन्धुं विबाल्यं वितस्तानामधि क्षमि । *Rv.* IV-30-12
 - 68. त्रिंशच्छतं वर्मिण इन्द्रसाकं यव्यावत्यां पुरुहूत श्रवस्य । *Rv.* VI-27-6
 - 69. उत में प्रयीयोर्वियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुग्वनि । *Rv.* VIII-19-37
 - 70. उत स्या श्वेतयावरी वाहिष्टा वां नदीनाम् । *Rv.* VIII-26-18
 - 71. अव दृप्सो अंशुमती मतिष्ठिदियानः कृष्णो दशभिः सहस्रैः । *Rv.* VIII-96-13
 - 72. अश्मन्वती रीयते सं रथध्वमुत्तिष्ठत प्र तरता सखायः । *Rv.* X-53-8
 - 73. आशर्म पर्वतानामोतापं वृणीमहे । द्यावाक्षामारे अस्मद्रपस्कृतम् ॥ *Rv.* VIII-18-16
दिवस्पृथिव्योरव आ वृणीमहे मातृत्सिन्धून्पर्वताज्यर्यणाक्तः । *Rv.* X-35-2
 - 74. शं न पर्वता द्युवयो भवन्तु ॥ *Rv.* VII-35-8
अस्येदु भिया गिरयश्च दुळ्हा द्यावा च भूमा जनुषस्तुजेते । *Rv.* I-61-14.
 - 75. अद्रयोऽश्रमण अशृथिता अमृत्यवः । *Rv.* X-94-11.

border region along the river Rasā, that flows to the ocean.⁷⁶ This mountain is called ‘Mahāmeru’.⁷⁷ The term Himavanta shows that this mountain was always covered with snow. This is present Himalayas.

Mūjavān :

The mountain Mūjavān is said to be the chief habitant of the Soma-plant.⁷⁸ Yāska said that it is the name of a mountain.⁷⁹ Vedic texts mention that it is the native region of the people called Mūjavants.⁸⁰ The Rgvedic people used to obtain the Soma-plant regularly from this moutain. Such references in the Vedic texts make us understand that the Mūjavān mountain lay to the north of the Rgvedic India. The mountain was intimately known to the Rgvedic people and its probable location is a part of the Karakoram range which hems the Indus basin in the North.⁸¹

Later Vedic texts mention the names of mountains like Manor-Avasarpaṇa, Trikakud Mainaka and Krauncha are laid to the Northern region. Vindhya, Paripatra mountain is said to form the southern boundary of Āryāvarta, which is called Aryan land. These are not mentioned in the *Rgveda Samhitā*.

76. यस्येमे हिमवन्तो महित्वा यस्य समुद्रा सहाहः। *Rv.* X-21-4.

77. *Taittariya Aranyaka*, I-7-1-3.

78. सोमस्येव मौजवतस्य भक्षो विभीदको जागृविर्मह्यमछान् X-34-1.

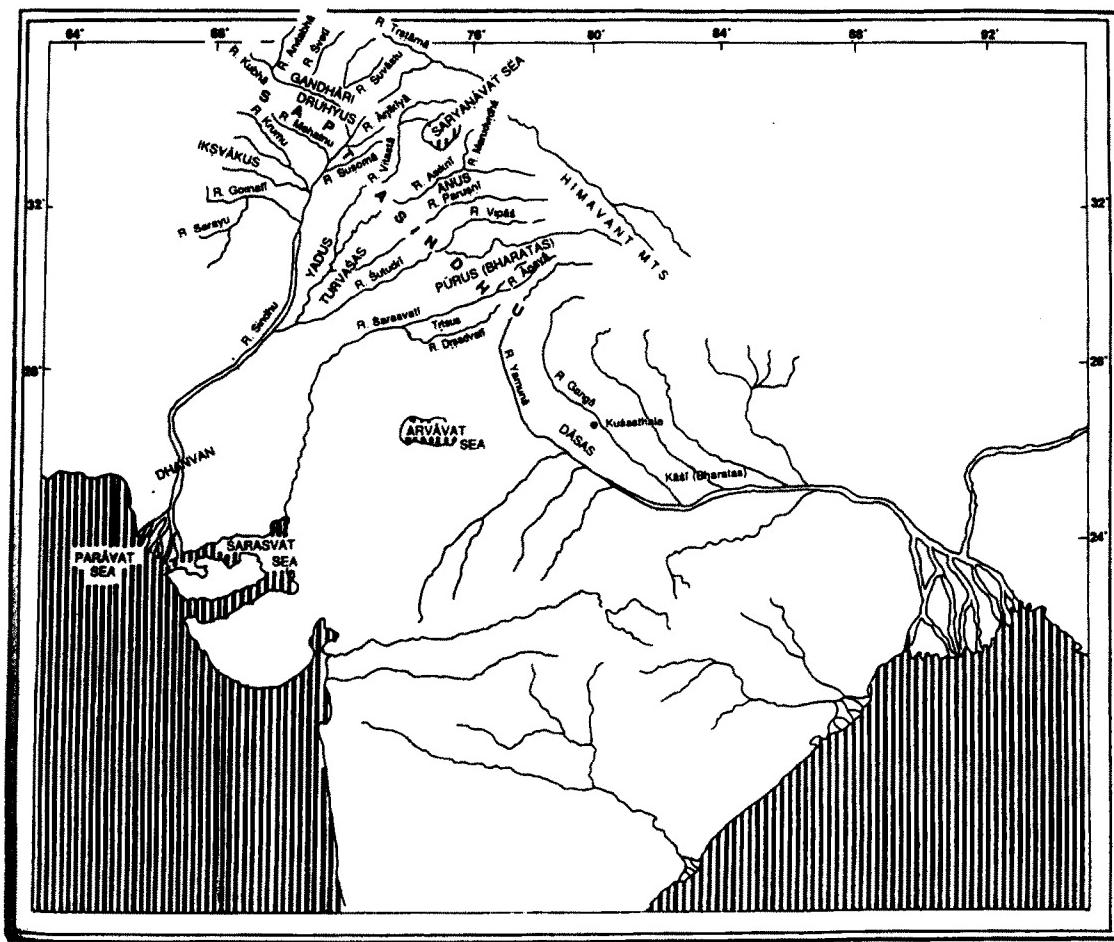
79. मौजवतो मूजवति जातः । मूजवान्पर्वतो मुञ्जवान् । मुञ्जोविमुच्यत इषीकया ।

Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-8.

80. *Taittariya Samhitā* I-8-6-2; *Kāthaka Samhitā*, IX-7; *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*, I-10-4-20; *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* III-61; *Atharvaveda*. V-22-5, 7,8,14 etc.

81. D.P. Saxena : *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p-2

Av. XII-1-11; *Taittariya Samhitā*, V-5-11-1; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII, 14,etc.



Saptasindhu Region in the Rgvedic Period

3. Economic-Historical Elements of the Rgveda

The *Rgveda* reveals that the people of that age were not solely devoted to religious rites and philosophical speculations. The R̄gvedic people were pursued various occupations. Though economy was largely agricultural and pastoral, various industries were also resorted to.

i. Agriculture :

The main occupation of the people in the R̄gvedic age was agriculture. Regarding this, the *Rgveda* clearly states : "Giving serious attention (to my advice), play not with dice ; pursue agriculture ; delight in wealth (so acquired) ; there, gambler, are cows ; there is a wife ; so has this (visible) sovereign Sāvitri declare to me."¹

"The ploughshare furrowing the field provides food the ploughman ; a man travelling along a road aquires wealth for his master by his movements ; a Brahman expounding the Veda is better than one not expounding it ; so let the man who gives become a kinsman to the man who gives not".²

The word 'Kṛṣi' (agriculture) is a derivative of the root 'Kṛś' (to cultivate). The Aśvins are seen associated with ploughing in agriculture.³ So also, Indra is associated with the ploughing. He

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1. अक्षैर्मा दीव्यः कृषिमिल्कृषस्व वित्ते रमस्व बहु मन्यमानः।
तत्र गावः कितव तत्र जाया तन्मे वि चष्टे सवितायमर्यः॥ *Rv. X-34-13.*
 2. कृषिन्नित्फाल आशितं कृणोति यन्नध्यानमप वृद्धुते चरित्रैः।
वदन् ब्रह्मावदतो वनीयान् पृणन्नापिर पृणन्तमभिष्यात्॥ *Rv. X-117-7.*
 3. दशस्यन्त मनवे पूर्व्य दिवि यवं वृकेण कर्षथ।
ता वामध्य सुमतिथिः शुभस्यती अश्विना प्र स्तुवीमहि॥ *Rv. VIII-22-6.*
यवं वृकेण अश्विना वपन्ता। *Rv. I-117-21*

is called the ‘*Urvarāpati*’⁴ the lord of the ploughed land. It is described that once *Vṛtra* withheld the timely rains and brought on distressing droughts that hampered the progress of agricultural work. In that crisis, Indra fought against the *Vṛtra*, killed him and let loose the rain by rending open his cloud-body.⁵ Indra is addressed as ‘*Sūnāsirau*’ along with *Vāyu*.⁶

The Agricultural Process :

The plough land was called *Urvarā* or *Kṣetra*. The lord of the field was called ‘*Kṣetrasya pati*.’ The word ‘*Khanitra*’ is used in the process of irrigation.⁷ The plough - *lāṅgala*, is mentioned only once in the *Rgveda* along with bullocks.⁸ Its synonym - *Sīra* is also found in the agricultural hymn (IV-57). *Yava* (Barley) is found to be the principal crop known to the Rgvedic people. The ripe grain was cut by *Dhātra* or *Śrīni*.⁹ The crop thus cut was being collected in bundles. This can be seen from the following *mantra* : “I take my sickle also in hand, Indra, with a prayer to you ; fill it, Maghavan, with a handful of barley already cut or piled”.¹⁰

4. आ याहीम इन्द्रवोऽश्वपते गोपत उर्वरापते ।
सोमं सोमपदे पिब ॥ *Rv.* VIII-21-3.
5. अहं भूमिमदामार्याहं वृष्टिं दाशुषे मर्त्याय ।
अहमपो अनयं वावशाना मम देवासो अनु केतमायन् ॥ *Rv.* IV-26-2.
6. शुनासिराविमां वाचं जुषेथां यद्विवि चक्रथुः पयः ।
तेनेमामुप सिज्जतम् ॥ *Rv.* IV-57-5.
7. अगस्त्यः खनमानः खनित्रैः प्रजामपत्यं बलमिच्छमानः । *Rv.* I-179-6
8. शुनं वाहाः शुनं नरः शुनं कृषतु लाङ्गलम् ।
शुनं वरत्रा बद्यन्तां शुनमष्टमुदिङ्गय ॥ *Rv.* IV-57-4
9. गिरा च श्रुष्टिः सभरा असन्नो नेदीय इत्सृण्यः पक्वमेयात् । *Rv.* X-101-3
10. तवेदिन्द्राहमाशसा हस्ते दात्रं चना ददे ।
दिनस्य वा मधवन्त्संभृतस्य वा पूर्धि यवस्य काशिना ॥ *Rv.* VIII-78-10

X-131-2 etc

The bundles (*pārsa*) are referred to as being beaten or trampled on the special place reserved for it which is called *Khala*.¹¹ The next operation was separation of grain from straw which was done with the winnowing fan.¹² For the measurement of the grain, a 'Urdara' (wooden vessel) was used.¹³ After the cleaning process, the grain was stored in *Sthivis*.¹⁴ There is a reference to sowing of seeds but transportation of saplings does not appear to be mentioned. The words '*Kṛṣṭi*'¹⁵ and '*Carsṇīḥ*'¹⁶ originally meant as cultivation and cultivated land, respectively, came to mean people in general and inhabited land.

The prayers for successful cultivation and the possession of cattle-wealth reveal the importance attached to *Rgvedic* people. The agricultural hymn describes the importance of agriculture, the worship of Kṣetrapati, and prayer to Indra, abundance of crops and the fertility of the soil, and agricultural method are found in the *Rgveda*.¹⁷

“With the master of the field, our friend, we triumph ; may he bestow upon us cattle, horses, nourishment, for by such (gifts) he makes us happy.

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11. खले न पर्षन् प्रतिहन्मि भूरि किं मा निन्दन्ति शत्रवोऽनिन्द्राः। *Rv.* X-48-7
 12. वपन्तो बीजमिव धान्याकृतः। *Rv.* X-94-13
 13. तमूर्दं न प्रणता यवेनेन्द्रम्। *Rv.* II-14-11
 14. यवमिव स्थिविभ्यः। *Rv.* X-68-3
 15. यदिन्विन्द्र पृथिवी दशभुजिरहानि विश्वा ततनन्त कृष्टयः। *Rv.* I-52-11
I-100-10; 160-5; III-49-1; IV-21-2 etc.
 16. अस्य श्रोषन्त्वा भुवो विश्वा यश्चर्षणीरभि।
सूरं चित्सस्तुषीरिषः॥ *Rv.* I-86-5
III-43-2
 17. *Rv.* IV-57.
क्षेत्रस्य पतिना वयं हितेनेव जयामसि। गामश्वं पोषयिन्त्वा स नो मृळातीदुशे ॥1॥
क्षेत्रस्य पते मधुमन्तमूर्मि धेनुरिव पयो अस्मासु धुक्ष्व।

Lord of the field, bestow upon us sweet abundant, (water),
as the milch cow (yields her) milk, dropping like honey, bland as
butter ; may the lords of the water make us happy.

May the herbs (of the field) be sweet for us ; may the
heavens, the waters, the firmament, be kind to us; may the lord
of the field be gracious to us ; let us, undeterred (by foes), have
recoursed to him.

May the oxen (draw) happily, the men (labour) happily; the
plough furrow happily, may the traces bind happily ; wield the
goad happily.

Śuna and Sīra be pleased by this our praise, and
consequently sprinkle this (earth) with the water which you have
created in heaven.

Auspicious Sītā, be present, we glorify you ; that you may be
propitious to us, that you may yield us abundant fruit.

May Indra take hold of Sītā ; may Puṣan guide her ; may
she, well stored with water, yield it as milk, year after year.

May the ploughshares break up our land happily; may the
plough-man go happily with the oxen ; may Parjanya (water the
earth) with sweet showers happily ; grant Śuna and Sīra,
prosperity to us".

मधुञ्जुतं घृतमिव सुपूतमृतस्य नः पतयो मृल्यन् ॥२॥
मधुमतीरोषधीद्यावि आपो मधुमन्त्रो भवत्वन्तरिक्षम्।
क्षेत्रस्य पतिर्मधुमन्त्रो अस्त्वरिष्यन्तो अन्वेन चरेम ॥३॥
शुनं वाहाः शुनं नरः शुनं कृषतु लाङ्गलम्। शुनं वरत्रा बद्यन्तां शुनमष्टामुदिङ्ग्य ॥४॥
शुनासीराविमां वाचं जुषेथां यद्धिवि चक्रथुः पयः। तेनेमामुप सिज्वतम् ॥५॥
अर्वाचि सुभगे भव सीते वन्दामहे त्वा। यथा नः सुभगाससि यथा नः सुफलाससि ॥६॥
इन्द्रः सीतां नि गृह्णातु तां पूषनु यच्छतु। स नः पयस्वती दुहामुत्तरामुत्तरां समाम् ॥७॥
शुनं नः फला वि कृषनु भूमिं शुनं कीनाशा अभि यन्तु वाहैः।
शुनं पर्जन्यो मधुना पयोधिः शुनासीरा शुनमस्मासु धत्तम् ॥८॥

ii. Cattle-breeding :

The *Rgveda* classifies the animals in three types. Those that pertain to the wind, those to the forest and those to domestic environments.¹⁸ The *Rgveda* indicates that the *Vāyavyah* beasts would be those which could fly, i.e the winged ones. Another distinction is between those beasts that could take by hands (*hastadāna*) and those that could do so only by the mouth (*mukhādāna*).¹⁹ In the latter category, are included almost all beasts, while in the former such beasts as men and the monkey. The *Rgveda* mentions frequently few animals, like ; Simhah (loin), Rṣya (wild deer), the Gavya (Bos gavaes), Mahiṣa (buffalo), Mṛga (the deer), Śiśumara (crocodile-like animal). etc.

Cattle-breeding forms an indispensable part of a farmer's life. The animal economy of the R̄gvedic people was not commercialised. Animals were kept for the supply of milk, butter, curd and ghee, it supplied the other needs of agriculture ; for, cattle were used for ploughing, carrying loads, and filling the carts. The R̄gvedic economy was primarily based on the cow, but other animals also contributed their share. Articles like sandals, straps and thongs, whips, bellows and bottles were manufactured from its hide. Besides, cow was also a medium of exchange, as various articles of daily need were bartered with cows. They were also given to priests as gifts. Oxen were the main draught animals being harnessed to carts and plough. Some times oxen were used for meat. In the *Rgveda*, sage

18. पशून् ताँश्चक्रे वायव्यां आरण्यान् ग्राम्याश्चये । *Rv.* X-90-8

19. S.A. Dange : *Cultural Sources from the Veda*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1977, p-12

Atithigva-host welcomed the guests by killing oxen and serving meat to them. Mahiṣa (buffaloes) supplied meat and milk and were used as drought animal. Aśvāḥ (horses) were also kept for riding, pulling chariots, battles and races and were given as gifts. The chief use of Uṣṭra or Uṣṭi (camel) was as a beast of burden. Hastināḥ (elephants) breeding was also known to the R̄gvedic people. Besides, cattle-breeding remained as a symbol of wealth and prosperity.

The main duty of the herdsmen was to take the cattle to pasture for grazing in the morning and bring them back home safely at evening. The pastures were wide and open where cattle used to roam and graze freely. They thrived during the winter season as the coming of early heat (summer) is said to be injurious to them. Drizzling rains by temperate cyclones during winters, gave them life, such rains appear to be associated with god Parjanya. The god Pūṣan regarded as the guardian of paths and expert in averting dangers in the way.

The *R̄gveda* throws an abundant light on values of cows, the well-being of a herdsman and his safe return home with the cows and prayers to the gods protection of the cattles. The hymn X-19 describes as follows :²⁰

“Come back ; go not elsewhere ; abounding in wealth, sprinkle us; Agni and Soma, you who cloth (your worshippers) again, bestow upon us riches.

20. *Rv. X - 19*

नि वर्तध्वं मानु गातास्मान्तिषष्कृत रेवतीः । अग्निषोमा पुनर्वसू अस्मे धारयन्तं स्यीम् ॥1॥
पुनरेना नि वर्तय पुनरेना न्या कुरु । इन्द्र एणा नि यच्छत्वग्निरेना उपाजतु ॥2॥

Bring them back again, render them obedient; may Indra restore them ; may Agni bring them night.

May they come back to me and be fostered under this (their) protector ; do, Agni, keep them here ; may whatever wealth (there is) remain here,

I invoke the knowledge of the place, of their going of their coming, of their departure, of their wandering, of their returning ; (I invoke) him who is their keeper.

May the keeper return (with them) ; he who reaches them when lost; who reaches them when straying; who reaches them when wandering, and returning.

Indra, come back and bring back (the cattle); give us our cows again, may we rejoice in our cows being alive.

I nourish you gods, who are ever where present, with curds, with butter, with milk; may all those deities who are entitled to worship, reward us with riches.

Come back (you cows), bring them back ; return (you cows), bring them back; and (you cows) coming back return; there are four quarters of the earth, bring them back from them".

पुनरेता नि वर्तन्तामस्मिन् पुष्टन्तु गोपतौ । इहैवाने नि धारयेह तिष्ठतु या रयिः ॥३॥
 यन्नियानं न्ययनं संज्ञानं यत्परायणम् । आवर्तनं निवर्तनं यो गोपा अपि तं हुवे ॥४॥
 य उदानङ् व्ययनं य उदानट् परायणम् । आवर्तनं निवर्तनमपि गोपा नि वर्तताम् ॥५॥
 आ नवर्ति नि वर्तय पुनर्न इन्द्र गा देहि । जीवाभिर्भुवनाजामहै ॥६॥
 परि वो विश्वतो दश ऊर्जा घृतेन पयसा । ये देवाः के च यज्ञियास्ते रथ्या सं सृजन्तु नः ॥७॥
 आ निवर्तन वर्तय नि निवर्तन वर्तय । भूम्याश्वतस्वः प्रदिशस्ताभ्य एना नि वर्तय ॥८॥



iii. Industrial Occupations :

The R̄gvedic people practised simple arts of a civilized life among all the artisans. The wood work and metal work were the most important for the R̄gvedic society. They prepared articles of common use, particularly those productions required in ritual performances, in the war and in agricultural implements. The artisans were themselves engaged in the food and clothing industries to prepare very simple articles. A large number of poor labours earned their livelihood by working from the lower crafts. In the R̄gvedic period, industry does not appear to be servile in nature. Some of them, were appointed by the king,²¹ who were called Rathakāra and Takṣan for preparing the articles required to king. Various industries were run by the R̄gvedic people, of which the most important and most worth are mentioned below :

Carpentry

In the R̄gvedic period 'Takṣan' was referred to a carpenter class. The Sanskrit term 'Takṣan' and Zend 'Tahan' and the Greek 'Tekan' all mean a carpenter. These terms indicate the existence and development of carpenter's art among the Indo-Europeans.²² Takṣan was specialised in the art of manufacturing chariots.²³ The Takṣan was also employed in making wooden vessels (*droṇa*) for household purpose²⁴ and among the ritual

21. Keith and Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p.96

22. Purushottam Chandra Jain : *Labour in Ancient India*, Sterling Publishers (p) Ltd.
New Delhi-16, 1971,p-81

23. रथं न तष्ट्रेव तत्सिनाय । *Rv*.I-61-4

24. दुणा सदस्थमश्नुषे । *Rv*.IX-65-6

accessories, Soma vessel (*camasa* or *dru* or *droṇa*).²⁵ Buckets (*āhāva*),²⁶ drinking and cooking vessels (*pātra*)²⁷ ladle (*mekṣṇa*)²⁸ and carts (*anas*)²⁹ were made of wood. The *Rgveda* mentions ships with hundred oars (*aritram*),³⁰ and furnished with wings or sails (*patatri*).³¹ Takṣan used to manufacture *Talpa* (cot)³² *Proṣṭha* (a broad wooden bench, on which women sleep),³³ and *Vahya* (more comparable wooden beds). Moreover *Śaniku* (wooden pegs),³⁴ *Kuliṣa* (axe)³⁵ were also manufactured.

Specialization in Carpentry :

The R̄gvedic references reveal that the Vedic carpenter had attained a high degree of competence in his trade. The fashioning of the wheels, the fitting on of tyres, the construction of chariots of special shape and design like those with three wheels with ornamental pillars and decorated awning, strong frames and axles are vividly referred to in the *Rgveda*. The carpenter was

25. न निन्दिम चमसं यो महाकुलोऽग्ने भ्रातार्दुण इद्वृतिमूदिम् । *Rv.* I-161-1
26. पूर्ण आहवो मदिरस्य मध्ये यं विश्व इदभिर्हर्यन्ति देवाः । *Rv.* X-112-6
I-134-8; X-101-6 etc
27. तुरीयं पात्रममृक्तममर्त्य द्रविणोदाः पिबतु द्रविणोदसः । *Rv.* II-37-4
I-34-8 ; 175-3 etc.
28. उप त्वा जुह्वोऽ मम धृताचीर्यन्तु हर्यत । अग्ने हव्या जुषस्वनः ॥ *Rv.* VIII-44-5
I-20-6; X-21-3 etc.
29. अपोषा अनसः सरत्संपिष्टादह भिष्युषी । *Rv.* IV-30-10
X-85-10; 86-18
30. शतं अस्त्रिं नावं अतस्थिवासम् । *Rv.* I-116-5
31. पतत्रीभिर्नासित्या सातये कृतं । *Rv.* X-143-5
32. तत्पाऽशीवरीः स्त्रियः । *Rv.* VII-55-8
33. प्रोष्टे शया वह्वेशया नारीः । *Rv.* VIII-55-8
34. शङ्खवोऽपिताः षष्ठिर्चलाचलासः । *Rv.* I-164-48
35. रथं न कुलिषाः समृष्टवती । *Rv.* III-2-1

expected to take great care to join very strong axle, because on it that the safety of the chariots and the inmates rested. The immortals, spoken of as depending upon Sāvitṛ are compared to a chariot resting upon the pin of the axle.³⁶

It is further stated that an axle of heavy weight is never heated up.³⁷ At another place, it is said that not only the axle but also the other parts of the chariot, should be strong to bear the heavy weight. Thus says the sage :

"May the horses be steady, the axle be strong, the pole be not defective ; the yoke not be rotten ; may Indra preserve the two yoke-pins from decay, car with the uninjured fellies, be ready for us.

Fix firmly the substance of the *khayar* (axle), give solidity to the *Shishu* (floor) of car ; strong axle, strongly fixed by us, be strong ; cast us not from out of our conveyance.

May this lord of the forest never desert us nor do us harm; may we travel prosperously home until the stopping (of the car), until the unharnessing of the steeds."³⁸

The following hymns reflect a scene of the battle-field where the chariot plays an important role :

36. आणि न रथ्यंमणृतं अधितस्थुः। *Rv. I-35-6*

37. तस्य न अक्षः तप्यते भूरिभारः । *Rv. I-164-13*

38. *Rv. III-53*

स्थिरौ गावौ भवतां वीक्षको मेषा वि वर्हि मा युगं वि शार ।
 इन्द्रः पातल्ये ददतां शिरीतोररिष्टनेमे अभि नः सचस्व ॥17॥
 अभि व्ययस्व खदिरस्य सारमोजो धही स्पन्दने शिंशपायाम् ।
 अक्ष वीक्षो वीक्षत वीक्ष्यस्व मा यामादस्मादव जीहिपो नः ॥19॥
 अयमस्मान्वनस्पतिर्मा च हा मा च रीरिष्ट ।
 स्वस्त्या गृहेभ्यः आवसा आ विमोचनात् ॥20॥

"O Aṅgiras, with the deities associated in the invocation, draw this offering near you as the *Rbhus* (bend) the circumference of a wheel.

Virūpa, with constant voice, address you praise to this well-pleased shower of blessings.

What strong enemy shall we overthrow, to win cows by the help of the host of this Agni of unmeasured radiance ?

May he not (forsake) us, the liege men of the gods, as the milk-streaming cows (forsake not) ; the cows abandon not a little calf."³⁹

Pottery :

The potter (*Kulāla*) was mentioned first time in the *Yajurveda*.⁴⁰ Another word 'Mṛtpaca' is also used in *Mitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*.⁴¹ The *Kulāla* was to supply various utensils for the domestic and ritual use. The *Rgveda* mentions cooking pot (*Ukhā*),⁴² and water pot (*Kumbha*),⁴³ but there is no mention of a specific name for *Kulāla*. Following R̄gvedic mantras describe :

39. *Rv* VI-75.

बह्वीनां पिता बहुरस्य पुत्रश्चिश्चा कृणोति समनावगत्य ।
इषुधिः सङ्काः पृतनाश्च सर्वाः पृष्टे निनद्वो जयति प्रसूतः ॥५॥
रथे तिष्ठन्नयति वाजिनः पुरो यत्रयत्र कामयते सुषारथिः ।
अभीशूनां महिमानं पनायत मनः पश्चादनु यच्चन्ति रश्मयः ॥६॥
तीव्रान्योषान्कृणवते वृषपाणयोऽश्वा रथेभिः सह वाजयन्तः ।
अवक्रामन्तः प्रपदैरमित्रान् क्षिणन्ति शत्रुंनपव्ययन्तः ॥७॥
रथवाहनं हविरस्य नाम यत्रायुधं निहितमस्य वर्म ।
तत्र रथमुप शग्मं सदेम विश्वाहा वयं सुमनस्यमानाः ॥८॥

40. *Yajurveda*, III-2-1

41. मृत्यचेनेदं शरीरं प्रतिष्ठापितम् । *Mitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*, II-6;

42. *Rv*. I-162-13, 15; III-53-22

43. *Rv*. I-116-7 ; 117-6 etc

"You filled from the hoof of your vigorous steed, as if from a cask, a hundred jars of wine."⁴⁴

"When you filled for the (expectant) man a hundred vessels of sweet (liquors) from the hoof of your fleet horse."⁴⁵

"You raised up (*Rebha*), Aśvins, on the tenth day, like a burried vessel full of gold ?"⁴⁶

"Your poison as maidens, with pitchers, carry away water."⁴⁷

"The vessel is filled for him (with Soma) ; welcome Indra ; I pour it out for you to drink, as a water-carrier (pours water) from his bag"⁴⁸

"Śakra advances, crushing the present Rākṣasas, as a hatchest cuts down (the trees of) a forest, as (a mallet smashes) the earthen vessels"⁴⁹

"he shattered the cloud like a new pitcher ; with his allies (the Maruts) he recovered the cattle"⁵⁰

Textiles :

The *Rgveda* contains more references to weavers and weaving. The traditions established by the R̄gvedic people continued for a long time to come. The *Vāya* and *Vāyyā*⁵¹- two

44. शतं कुम्भान् असिंचतं सुरायाः । *Rv.* I-116-7

45. शतं कुम्भान् असिंचताम् मधूनाम् । *Rv.* I-117-6

46. हिरण्यस्य इव कलशम् । *Rv.* I-117-12

47. उदकं कुभिनीरिव । *Rv.* I-191-14

48. आपूर्णाः अस्य कलशः । *Rv.* III-32-15

49. पात्रेवभिन्दन्त्सत एति रक्षसः । *Rv.* VII-104-21

50. बिभेद गिरि नवं मिन्न न कुम्भं । *Rv.* X-89-7

51. पुनः समव्यद्वितं वयन्ती । *Rv.* II-38-4

उषानक्ता वय्येव रण्विते । *Rv.* II-3-6

words indicate the weavers. In the latter reference, the female weaver is indicated by the word *vāyyā*. In the *Rgveda*, several words indicate that the textile industry. The words *Tantum*, *otum* and *Vayanti*⁵² used for warp, woof and web. *Tasara* used for a weaver's shuttle.⁵³ *Mayūkhas*⁵⁴ referring to wooden-pegs are used for stretching the web (*tantra*).⁵⁵

In the R̄gvedic period, wool was the chief raw material of the textile industry. Cotton and other fibre crops were not grown during that time. The **Sapta-Sindhu** region is famous for wool. The river Paruṣṇī is said to be '*Ūṛṇā*'⁵⁶ and Sarasvatī is also called '*Ūṛṇāvati*'.⁵⁷ But, the best wool came from the *Gandhāris*.⁵⁸ The wool-industry was well developed in the R̄gvedic period. The textile production of *vastra* is mentioned at various places in the *Rgveda*.⁵⁹ Dr.S.A.Dange explains three types of garments : *Nīvi* (the under garment), the *Atk* (the fitting wear), *Adhvāsas*, which was the upper garment like the general coverings, *Drāpi* (a general tough covering like the armour) and *Śāmulyā* in an address to the bride.⁶⁰ In the R̄gvedic period, wearing was probably entrusted to women. Such R̄gvedic references describe elements regarding textile industry as below:

52. न अहं तंतुं न विजानामि ओतुं न वयन्ति । *Rv.* I-75-5, 6;7-8

53. सामानि चक्षुः तसराणि ओतवे । *Rv.*X-130-2

54. इमे मयूखा उप सोदुरु सदः । *Rv.*X-130-2

55. त एते वाचमभिपद्य पापया सिरीस्तन्त्रं तन्वते अप्रजन्यः । *Rv.* X-71-9

56. श्रिये परुष्णीमुषामाण ऊर्णा यस्याः पर्वाणि सख्याय विव्ये *Rv.* IV-22-2

57. उर्णाविती युवतिः सीलमावत्युताधि वस्ते सुभगा मधुवृथम् । *Rv.* X-75-8

58. सर्वाहमस्मि रेमशा गन्धासैणामिवाकिका । *Rv.*I-126-7

59. भद्रा वस्त्राण्यर्जुना वसाना सेयमस्मे सनजा पित्र्या धीः ॥ *Rv.* III-39-2

60. S.A. Dange : *Cultural Sources from the Veda*, p-43

"Two famous female weavers are said to extend, thread to complete the web of the sacrifice."⁶¹

"she, (wight) enwraps the extended (world) like (a woman) weaving a garment."⁶²

"for a son, the (divine) mothers weave garments (of light)."⁶³

"The seven milch cows approach the green-tinted soma which flows purified in a stream through the woollen fleece."⁶⁴

"The sounding (soma) passes through the weollen fleece."⁶⁵

The Leather Industry:

The leather working was one of the occupations in the R̄gvedic time. The *R̄gveda* mentions *Carmamnā*⁶⁶ (tanner) and tanned leather.⁶⁷ The word *Carman* means hide and *Carmanyā* indicates leather-work.⁶⁸ The word 'Go' is also sometimes used as a synonym of *Carman*.⁶⁹ The *R̄gveda* mentions various leather articles manufactured by Carmamna, e.g bow-strings,⁷⁰ a

61. उषसा नक्त वया इव रण्विते ततं तत संवयन्ती । *Rv.* II-3-6

62. वस्त्रा पुत्राय मातरो वयन्ती । *Rv.* V-47-6

63. पुनः सं अव्यत विततं वयन्ति *Rv.* II-38-4,

64. अव्ये पुनानं परि वार ऊर्मिणा हरि नवन्ते अभि सप्त धेनवः ।

अपामुपस्ते अथ्यायवः कविमृतस्य योना महिषा अहेषत ॥ *Rv.* IX-86-25

प्र रेभ एत्यति वरमैव्ययं वृषा वनेश्वव चक्रददरिः ।

सं धीतयो वावशान अनूषत शिशुं रिहन्ति मतयः पनिप्रतम् ॥ *Rv.* IX-86-31

55. यो यज्ञो विश्वतस्तनुभिस्त एकशतं देव कर्मेभिरायतः ।

इमे वयन्ति पितरो य आययुः प्र वयाप वयेत्यासते तते ॥ *Rv.* X-130-1

66. अथस्पदा इच्छैद्यस्य कृष्ट्यच्छुर्मन्मा अभितो जनाः ॥ *Rv.* VIII-5-38

67. शतं वेणूञ्छतं शुनः शतं चर्माणि म्लातानि । *Rv.* VIII-55-3

68. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, V-32

69. ते सोमादो हरी इन्द्रस्य निंसतेऽशुद्धुहन्तो अथ्यासते गवि ॥ *Rv.* X-94-9

70. गोभिः सन्नद्वा पतति प्रसूता । *Rv.* VI-75-11

slings,⁷¹ thongs to fasten the parts of the chariots,⁷² reins for horses,⁷³ the lash of a whip,⁷⁴ etc. In the R̄gvedic period, hide-vessels were used for storing soma-juice,⁷⁵ honey,⁷⁶ curd⁷⁷ and wine.⁷⁸ Soma-juice is described as being kept in leather bottles.⁷⁹ The Varatrās⁸⁰ and the hastagna hand-guard⁸¹ of the soldiers was made of leather. The leather armour was of dark colour and is compared with cloud.⁸² The Carmamna supplied leather for the construction of war drums.⁸³ Leather articles, in same sūkta are mentioned.⁸⁴

The Metal Industry:

The metal industry also developed in the R̄gvedic period. Metal articles were made for domestic and ritual uses. The Karmāra⁸⁵ was considered as one of the most skilful workers in

71. अश्मानमुपनीत मृभ्वा । *Rv.* I-121-9
72. गोभिः सन्नद्धो असि बिळयस्व । *Rv.* VI-47-26
73. गृभीता बाह्योर्गवि । *Rv.* VI-46-14
74. गो ओपशाश्वर्णे पशुसाबनी *Rv.* VI-53-9
75. प्रसुवान इन्दुरक्षाः पवित्रमत्यव्यम् । *Rv.* IX-66-28
एषसोमो अधि त्वचिगवां क्रीळत्यद्रिभिः । *Rv.* IX-66-29
76. यो हवां मधुनः दृतिः आहितः रथ चर्षणे । ततः पिबतं अश्विना । *Rv* VIII-5-19
77. दृतेरिव तेऽवृकमस्तु सख्यम् ।
अच्छिद्रस्य दधन्वतः सुपूर्णस्य दधन्वतः ॥ *Rv.* VI-48-18
78. सूर्ये विषमासजामि दृतिं सुरावतो गृहे । *Rv.* I-191-10
79. चैदस्य कृष्टयः चर्ममा अभितो जनाः । *Rv.* VIII-5-38
80. निराहावान् कृष्णोतन सं वरत्रा दधातन । *Rv.* X-101-5
81. हस्तग्नो विश्वा वयुनानि विद्वान्मुमान्मुमांसं परि पातु विश्वतः । *Rv.* VI-75-14
82. जीमूतस्येव भवति प्रतीकं यद्वर्मी याति समदामुपस्थे ।
अनाविद्या तन्वा जय त्वं स त्वा वर्मणो महिमा पिपर्तु ॥ *Rv.* VI-75-1
83. दुन्दुभे सजूः इन्द्रेण देवैः । *Rv.* VI-47-29
84. *Rv.* V-61-2,3
85. ब्रह्मणस्पतिरेता सं कर्मारङ्गवाधमत् । *Rv.* X-72-2
कर्मारो अश्मभिर्द्युभिर्हिरण्यवन्तमिच्छतीन्द्रायेन्द्रो परि स्व । *Rv.* IX-112-2

the R̄gvedic society. He is said as smelting (*dhma*ā) the ore in the fire; hence he is called *dhamātr* (the smelter)⁸⁶ He smelted ore with the help of fans or bellows made of bird feathers.⁸⁷

The smith used to prepare *Dātra* or *Sriṇi* (sicle),⁸⁸ *Phāla* (plough-share)⁸⁹ for agricultural purpose. *Asi* denoting a sacrificial knife⁹⁰ as well as a spear, used in war,⁹¹ *Paraśu* (axe),⁹² *Pavīra* (lance),⁹³ arrows, *Rṣti* (spears) and daggers,⁹⁴ sharp-edged swords⁹⁵ and sharp-pointed shafts,⁹⁶ for war, also made by smith. He was supplying weapons of war. The smith was preparing other things for the protection of warriors in battle. The *R̄gveda* mentions wearing nailed armour,⁹⁷ *Sipras*⁹⁸ (covering warriors heads) and anklets for the feets.⁹⁹

In the *R̄gveda Samhitā*, 'Ayas' was also mentioned in various places. But it is difficult to prove that 'ayas' is used in the sense

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- 86. यदीमह त्रितो दिव्युप आतेव धमति शिशीते धातरी यथा । *Rv.* V-9-5
 - 87. जरतीभिः ओषधीभिः पर्णेभिः शकुनानाम् । *Rv.* IX-112-2
 - 88. हस्ते दात्रं चना अददे । *Rv.* VIII-78-10
 - 89. सृण्यः पक्वं एयात् । *Rv.* X-101-3
 - 90. शुनं न फालः वि कृष्टनु भूमिम् । *Rv.* IV-57-8
 - 91. गात्राणि असीना मिथूकः । *Rv.* I-162-20
 - 92. चकर्त गां इव असिः । *Rv.* X-79-6
 - 93. यो जनान् महिषौ इवातितस्थौ पवीरवान् । उतापवीरवान् युधा ॥ *Rv.* X-60-3
 - 94. वाशीमन्तः ऋष्टिमन्तो मनीषिणः सुधन्वान इषुमन्तो निषट्टिणः ।
स्वश्वाः स्थ सुरथाः प्रस्तिमातरः स्वायुधा मरुतो याथना शुभम् ॥ *Rv.* V-57-2
 - 95. चोदयाधियमयसो न धाराम् । *Rv.* VI-47-10
 - 96. यदन्तरिक्षे पतयन्ति पर्णिनो दिव्यवस्तिगममूर्धनः । *Rv.* VI-46-11
 - 97. त्रिंशच्छतं वर्मिणिद्रसाकं । *Rv.* VI-27-6
 - 98. शिप्राः शीर्षसु वितता हिरण्ययी । *Rv.* V-54-11
 - 99. अंसेषु व ऋष्टयः पत्सुखादयो वक्षः सु रुक्मा । *Rv.* V-54-11

of ‘bronze’ or ‘iron’. About the horse, it is said—“His horne is that of gold, his feet are of *ayas*.¹⁰⁰ Agni is said to have the jaws of *ayas*.¹⁰¹ There is a reference to smiths who were manufacturing superior quality of swords (*ayas*)¹⁰² or knife (*kṣura*).¹⁰³

Hiranya or gold was the one of the main useful metal in the R̄gvedic society. Gold is the symbol of the Sun in ritual. This metal was used mostly for ornaments and rarely for vessels. The metal was, it is clear, obtained from the beds of rivers. The Sindhu is referred to as *hiranyayi*,¹⁰⁴ and the Sarasvatī is also said to be *hiranya-vartani*.¹⁰⁵ Gold was being obtained after smelting ore, and the same was used to produce ornaments like ‘*nikṣa*’ (necklace)¹⁰⁶ and ‘*rukma*’ (disk of gold)¹⁰⁷ an ornament of breast, ‘*Karṇa-śobhana*’ (ear-rings).¹⁰⁸ And the ‘*Kurīra*’ (head-ornament)¹⁰⁹ is referred to in connection with the bride’s ornament. Golden ornaments for the decoration of the chariots of warriors, golden yokes,¹¹⁰ golden armour,¹¹¹ and golden trappings for horses,¹¹² too were being made.

100. हिरण्यशृङ्गोऽयो अस्य पादा मनोजवा अवर इन्द्र आसीत् । *Rv.* I-163-9

101. अग्निरेको चोदयत्समत्स्वग्निर्वत्राणि दयते पुरुष्णि । *Rv.* X-80-2

102. चोदय धियं अयसः न धराम् । *Rv.* VI-47-10

103. सं नः शिशीहि भुरिजो इव क्षुरं रास्व । *Rv.* VIII-4-16

104. स्वश्वा सिञ्चुः सुरथा सुवासा हिरण्ययी सुकृता वाजिनीवती । *Rv.* X-75-8

105. *Rv.* VI-61-7

106. अर्हन् निष्कं यजतं विश्वरूपं । *Rv.* II-33-10, V-19-3 etc.

107. वक्षः सु रुक्मा रभसासो अञ्जयः । *Rv.* I-166-10, IV-16-5; V-53-4 etc

108. अतनः कर्णशोभनापुरुष्णि । *Rv.* VIII-78-3

109. रथीमः आसन् प्रतिध्वः कुरीरं । *Rv.* X-85-8

110. वि जनाञ्छ्यावतः शितिपादो आख्यत्रथं हिरण्य प्रउगं वहन्तः *Rv.* I-35-5

111. *Rv.* IV-53-2

112. प्र यन्तु वाजास्तविषीभिरग्नयः शुभे संमिश्लाः पृष्ठतिरयुक्षत । *Rv.* III-26-4

iv. Means of Trade and Transportation:

Economically, the R̄gvedic land was characterised by anomalous distribution of various products of human need. Such as the Sindhu and the Paruṣṇī valleys supplied horses, honey, wool, and garments.¹¹³ Such products were often transported from the various areas to the consumers.

The importance of transportation as realised by the R̄gvedic people can be assessed from the Aryan conception of presiding deities of the three regions, i.e. lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere. Pūṣan¹¹⁴ is figured as the master of land transportation, Varuṇa¹¹⁵ as the guardian of navigation and Aśvins¹¹⁶ as the rulers of the sea and air routes.

The *anas* (cart)¹¹⁷ and *ratha* (chariot)¹¹⁸ were the means of transportation on land. The *R̄gveda Samhitā* deals with the construction of the chariot. They were made by carpenters and chariot makers. The following *mantra* describes :¹¹⁹

113. स्वश्वा सिन्धुः सुरथा सुवासा हिरण्ययी सुकृता वजिनीवती ।
ऊर्णावती युवतीः सीलमावस्युतादि वस्ते सुभगा मधूवृथम् । *Rv.* X-75-8
उत स्म ते परुष्यामूर्णा वसत शुन्ध्यवः । *Rv.* V-52-9
- 114 वयमु त्वा पथस्पते रथं न वाजसातये । धिये पूषन्नयुज्महि ॥ *Rv.* VI-53-1
- 115 वेदा ये वीनां पदमन्तरिक्षेण पतताम् । वेद नावः समुद्रियः ॥ *Rv.* I-25-7
- 116 अनारम्भणे तदवीरयेथामनास्थाने अग्रभणे समुद्रे ।
यदश्विना ऊहथुर्भुज्यमस्तं शतारित्रां नावमातस्थिवांसम् ॥ *Rv.* I-116-5
तुग्रे ह भुज्युमश्विनोदमेद्ये रयिं न कश्चिमृवाँ अवाहाः ।
तमूहथुर्भिरात्मान्वतीभिरन्तपरिक्षप्तुद्विरपोदकार्मिः ॥ *Rv.* I-116-3
- 117 अपोषा अनसः सरत्संपिष्टादह बभ्युषी । *Rv.* IV-30-10
X-85-10 ; 86-18 etc
- 118 रथीतमं रथीनां वाजानां सत्यतिं पतिम् । *Rv.* I-11-1
अया निजग्निरोजसा रथसङ्गे धने हिते । *Rv.* IX-53-2
119. *Rv.* III-53-17

"May the horses be steady, the axle be strong, the pole be not defective; the yoke not be rotten; may Indra preserve the two yoke-pins from decay, car with the uninjured fellies, be ready for us."

The *Rgveda* informs, the main part of cart and chariot had two wheels (*cakra*).¹²⁰ The wheels consisted of a rim (*pavi*),¹²¹ a felly (*pradhi*),¹²² spokes (*ara*)¹²³ and nave (*nabhya*).¹²⁴ The rim and felly together constituted the *nemi*.¹²⁵ The hole in the nave was called *kha*,¹²⁶ and into it, the end of the axle (*akṣa*)¹²⁷ was inserted. To the axle, was attached the body of the chariot (*kośa*).¹²⁸ At right angles to the axle was fixed the pole of the chariot (*praūga*). Oxen and horses were commonly used to draw the vehicles (*anaḍvāḥ*).¹²⁹ The reins (*raśmi*)¹³⁰ were fastened to the bit in the horses' mouth. The driver controlled the horses by

120. सप्त युज्जन्ति रथमेकचक्रमेको अश्वो वहति सप्तनामा ।
त्रिनाभिचक्रमजरमनर्वं यत्रेमा विश्वा भुवनाधि तस्तुः ॥ *Rv.* I-164-2
I-130-9 ; 155-6; II-174-5 etc.
121. त्रयः पवयो मधुवाहने रथे सोमस्य वेनामनु विश्व इद्विदुः ॥ *Rv.* I-34-2
रुक्मो न चित्रः स्वधितीवान्पव्या रथस्य जङ्घनन्त भूम ॥ *Rv.* I-88-2
I-139-3 ; 166-10 etc.
122. स्तोमा आसन्त्रितधयः कुरीरं छन्दं ओपशः ॥ *Rv.* X-85-8
123. यत्सीमनु क्रतुना विश्वथा विभुररात्रं नेमिः परिभूरजायथाः ॥ *Rv.* I-141-9
I-32-15; V-13-6 etc
124. यस्मिन्विश्वानि काव्या चक्रे नाभिरिव श्रिता ॥ *Rv.* VIII-41-6
125. सोदु राजा क्षयति चर्षणीनामरात्रं नेमिः परिताबभूव ॥ *Rv.* I-32-15
I-141-9; II-5-3 etc.
126. खे रथस्य खेऽनसः खे युगस्य शतक्रतो ॥ *Rv.* VIII-91-7
VIII-77-3; X-56-3
127. ऋणोरक्षं न चक्रयोः ॥ *Rv.* I-30-14
128. श्वोतन्ति कोशा उप वो रथेष्वा धृतमुक्षता मधुवर्णमर्चते ॥ *Rv.* I-87-2
129. समिन्द्रेरय गमनङ्गाहं य आवहुशीनराण्या अनः ॥ *Rv.* X-59-10
शुक्रावनाङ्गावास्तां यदयात्सीर्या गृहम् ॥ *Rv.* X-85-10
130. यत्र मन्थां विबन्धते रश्मीन्यमितवा इव ॥ *Rv.* I-28-4

reins. Normally, a pair of animals was harnessed at a time to a *Ratha*, but sometimes, only one¹³¹ or two different animals such as ox and buffalo were yoked.

In the Rgvedic period, transportation was carried through river-routes. The *Rgveda* mentions boat (*nau*)¹³² propelled with oars (*aritra*)¹³³ and rower of a boat (*aritri*). The water transportation as called (*nāvya*)¹³⁴ navigable. Some times boats, rafts (*dyumna*) were also used.

There are clear references in the hymns of the *Rgveda*, to trading in distant lands for profit.¹³⁵ The prayers and oblations offered for "gaining hundred treasures"¹³⁶ are also probably those of merchants seeking divine aid for success in trade. Apart from trade with foreign countries, or alien tribes, there must have been quite extensive inland trade, but no definite details are available. Haggling in the market was, however, well-known.

The exchange of commodities on the principle of barter seems to have been in vague, but cow had already come to be regarded as a unit of value.¹³⁷ There might have been other recognized units of value. Great importance attaches to one such unit called *niṣka*. It meant originally a gold ornament of the shape of a necklace or a necklet. When, however, in a hymn, the seer celebrates the receipt

131. गव्यन्त इन्द्रं सखाय विप्रा अश्वायन्तो वृषणं वाजयन्तः *Rv.* X-131-3

132. *Rv.* I-131-2; II-39-4 etc.

133. शतारित्रां नावमातस्थिवांसम्। *Rv.* I-116-5

134. *Rv.* I-33-11; I-80-8

135. *Rv.* I-56-2

136. इमां धियं शतसेयाय बलाय। *Rv.* II-18-3

137. *Rv.* IV-24-10

of a hundred *niṣkas* with a hundred horses, as a gift, he could hardly be referring to a hundred necklets.¹³⁸ So it probably came to be used as a sort of currency even during the R̄gvedic age.

In fine the physiogeographic frame of the *R̄gveda* finds out economic factors of R̄gvedic India. Of course, there is non-availability of systematic statistical information of the economic basis in different patterns. Yet the available details of the economy of R̄gvedic people help us to visualise the economic systems in the regional units. As it is seen, the economic basis of R̄gvedic India is mainly formed with three component organs i.e., Agriculture, cattle-breeding and industrial occupations. The illustrations given above, show the fact that there was gradual transformation from pastoral to agricultural economy in the during the R̄gvedic times.



138. शतं राजो नाधमानस्य निष्काञ्छतः । *Rv.* I-26-2

CHAPTER - III

A CRITICAL EXPOSITION OF THE HISTORICAL COMPOSITIONS (HYMNS)

This chapter reads a critical exposition of the Dasarajna war, Rgvedic tribes, royal kings, the Danastutis, the Akhyanas, the socio-political institutions and the elements of religion as well as science.

1. The Dāśarājña War

The *Dāśarājña* war is historically most important fact recorded in the *Rgveda Samhitā*. The *Rgveda* is a book containing devotional songs in praise of various gods. Yet, the narration of a historical events like *Dāśarājña* in its conspectus is really very remarkable. In ancient Indian history, the *Dāśarājña* war bears very vital and important aspect. U.C. Sharma remarks - "The Indo-Aryan settlers have already been established and had already their roots shown in the soil of this country. They were divided in several tribes and peoples. It seems, there was a tough competition among them to gain power and superiority over others. The aid of non-Aryan tribes was being sought in this conflict of overlordship".¹

1. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭas*, Viveka Publications, Aligarh, 1975, p-269.

The term '*Dāśarājñā*' has been mentioned thrice in the *Rgveda*, and once in the *Atharvaveda*.² The most important event of '*Dāśarājñā*' is recorded in the *Rgveda Mandala*, III-53 and VII-18, 33 and 83. The third *Mandala* is the seership of Viśvāmitra and seventh is of Vasiṣṭha. The number 'Daśa' in the word *Dāśarājñā* is only descriptive and not definitive. It does not refer to a definite number ten, but is intended to convey a number, slightly more or less than ten. It is found that the leader of the Bharatās, Sudās Paijavana and of Tṛtsus fought against the allied forces of the *Dāśarājñā* kings. Aryan and non-Aryan tribes allied to the latter, took part in the war. It is to be noted here that Puru, Yadu, Turvaśa, Anu, Druhyu, Alina, Paktha, Bhalāṇas, Śiva, Viśāṇin, Śimyu, Vaikarna, etc., form the group of *Dāśarājñā* kings.

An Outline of the *Dāśarājñā* War

King Sudās Paijavana, with a small army of his followers, the Bharatas, was once attacked by the allies of the *Dāśarājñā* kings and were cornered by the latter on the banks of high-flowing Paruṣṇī. Seeing his futility of resistance, king Sudās prayed the god Indra, and he won the war with the help thereof. From the description in the hymn, it appears that some of the ten allies tried to pursue Sudās by crossing the river after him. They were however, drowned because, as soon as they entered the river, they were overpowered by an onrushing flood sent down by Indra. Some of them tried to make the waters of the river shallow by digging channels in different directions; but they miserably failed in their endeavour and met with severe

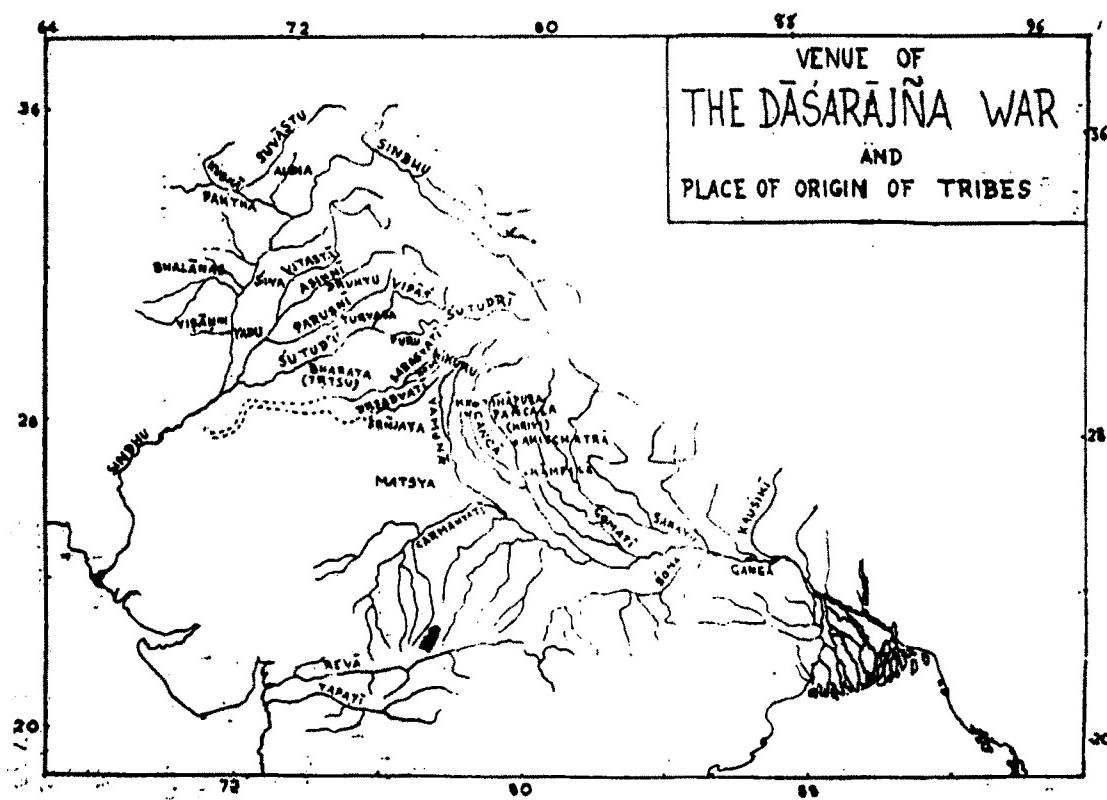
2. *Rv.* VII-33-3,5 ; 83-8 ; *Av.* XX-128-12.

disaster. Many were washed off by the powerful flowing currents of the river. Some who succeeded in reaching the other bank but immediately were killed by Sudās and his Bharatas who were waiting to pounce upon them.

The fifteenth *mantra* in the eighteenth hymn of the seventh *Mandala* tells that Tr̄tsus with the inspiration from Indra, ran down like the released waters evidently against what had remained of the combined forces of the *Dāśarājña* kings after the terrible disaster with which they met in the waters of the flooded Paruṣṇī. Here, probably as may be inferred, Sudās's warriors inflicted a decisive defeat upon them. They were put to flight and had to leave all their important and proud possessions to the victor. On this occasion too, they must have tried a retreat across the river, though without success, and it is possible that the description in *mantras* VII. 18. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, refers to the crossing of the enemy on either way. The reference that the two armies, had actually come to grips at some stage, appears to be a fact from two *mantras* VII. 18. 16 and 17, wherein Indra is said to have laid low on the ground the arrogant enemy, and to have killed a lioness through a lamb etc. As suggested in the *mantra* VII. 18. 18, Bheda and his allies the Ajās, the Śigrus and Yakṣus, who belonged very likely to an earlier phase of the *Dāśarājña* or to another war. They were won on the banks of the Yamunā by Sudās under the spiritual guidance of the Tr̄tsus. The killing of Devaka and Śambara, however mentioned in *mantra* VII. 18. 20, seem to be a reference to earlier events which took place in reign of Sudās's grand-father Divodāsa, if they are not to be regarded as purely mythical.

Battle-field of the Dāśarājna War

In the R̄gvedic references, at least two battle-fields are notable. One is bank of Paruṣṇī and the other being the bank of Yamunā. So the geographical battle-field of this war may be said to have been bounded by Paruṣṇī in the West and the Yamunā in the east. The river Paruṣṇī is later called Irāvatī, hence the present name is Rāvi. The capital of Sudās Paijavana could be somewhere on the famous Sarasvatī river which falls between Paruṣṇī and Yamunā. Thus, the modern states of the Haryana and the Punjab in India and the eastern part of the west Punjab in Pakistan may well be ascertained as the area of operation of the notable events of the great *Dāśarājña* war. Following is the map thereof :



On the basis of the references found in the III *mandala*, the seer Viśvāmitra could be said to be the priest of the Bharatas.³ He conducted king Sudās and his troops over the waters of Vipāś and Śutudrī. He helped Sudās for the expansion of the Bharatas. The Bhojas in the *mantra* III-53-7, said that they are descendants of Sudās. Viśvāmitra helped them for invokeing Indra. They offered to Viśvāmitra countless wealth in the horse-sacrifice. In the *mantra* III-53-9, it is said that Viśvāmitra escorted Sudās over the waters of the mighty rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī. The hymn III. 33 presents a dialogue between Viśvāmitra and these two rivers, in which it is described that Viśvāmitra wanted to make them fordable so that the advancing Bharatas could go forward. It shows that formerly Viśvāmitra was the leader of the Bharatas and helped them west-ward expedition. He was also the priest in the horse-sacrifice, whcih was performed by Sudās to celebrate his victory. Viśvāmitra prayed to Indra and helped the Bharatas. In this sacrifice, he used his divine powers. The relevant *mantras* of the *Rgveda* III-53, are as under:

"These sacrifices are the Bhojas, of whom the diversified Aṅgirasas are the priests; and the heroic sons of the expeller of the foes of the gods from heaven, bestowing riches upon Viśvāmitra at the sacrifice of a thousand victims, prolong his life."⁴

The great *Rṣi*, the generator of the gods, attracted by the deities, the overlooker of the leaders at holy rites, Viśvāmitra arrested the

3. विश्वामित्रिषः सुदासः पैजवनस्य पुरोहितोबभूव । पैजवनः पिजवनस्य पुत्रः ।

Yāska, Nirukta II-24.

4. इमे भोजा अङ्गिरसो विरूपा दिवस्पुत्रासो असुरस्य वीराः ।

विश्वामित्राय ददतो मधानि सहस्रसावे प्रतिरन्त आयुः ॥ *Rv. III-53-7*

watery stream when he sacrificed for Sudās; Indra, with the Kuśikas, was pleased.⁵

Sages and Saints, overlookers of the leaders of sacred rites, Kuśikas, when the Soma is expressed with stones at the sacrifice, then exhilarating the gods with praise, sing the holy strain (aloud) like (screaming) swans, and together with the gods, drink the sweet juice of the Soma.⁶

Approach Kuśikas, the stead of Sudās; animate him, and let him loose to win riches for the Rājā; for the king (of gods) has slain Vṛtra in the East, in the west, in the North, therefore let Sudās worship him in the best regions of the earth.⁷

I have made Indra glorified by these two, heaven and earth and this prayer of Viśvāmitra protects the race of Bharatas.”⁸

A picturesque description of the *Dāśarājñā* war is recorded in the seventh *Māṇḍala* of which Vasiṣṭha is the seer. The subject-matter is found in the three hymns i.e. VII-18, 33, and 83. It's description is quite natural. Of these hymns, eighteenth is most important in giving significant elements about the *Dāśarājñā* war.

The eighteenth hymn is a type of *Dānastuti*. Vasiṣṭha praises donations received from king Sudās after successful completion of

5. महां ऋषिर्देवजा देवजूतोऽस्तभसि-न्धुमर्णवं नृचक्षाः।
विश्वामित्रो यदवहत्पुदासमप्रियायत कुशिकेभिरिन्दः ॥ *Rv. III-53-9*
6. हंसा इव कृणुथ श्लोक मद्रिभिर्मदन्तो गीर्भिरध्वरे सुते सचा ।
देवेभिर्विप्रा ऋषयो नृचक्षासो वि पिबद्धं कुशिकाः सोम्यं मधु ॥ *Rv. III-53-10*
7. उपप्रेत कुशिकाश्चेतयध्वमश्वं गाये प्र मुज्ज्वता सुदासः ।
राजा वृत्रं जड्घनत्रागपागुदगथां यजाते वर आ पृथिव्याः ॥ *Rv. III-53-11*
8. य इमे रोदसी उभे अहमिन्द्रमतुष्टवम् ।
विश्वामित्रस्य रक्षति ब्रह्मेदं भारतं जनम् ॥ *Rv. III-53-12*

the sacrifice. Also, the hymn gives a vivid description of the *Dāśarājñā* war. It was between king Sudās, the leader of the Bharatas, on the one side, and *Dāśarājñā* kings on the other. The battle took place on the bank of Paruṣṇī. The relevant *mantras* describing the *Dāśarājñā* war are as follows:

"The adorable Indra made the well-known deep waters of the Paruṣṇī fordable for Sudās, and converted the vehement awakening imprecation of the Sacrificer into the calumniaition of the rivers.⁹

Turvaśa, who was proceeding at solemn rites, diligent in sacrifice went to Sudās for wealth; but like fishes restricted to the element of water; the Bhṛgus and Druhyus quickly assailed them of these two everywhere going, the friend of Sudās, Indra rescued his friend.¹⁰

Those who dress the oblation, those who pronounce auspicious words, those who abstain from penance, those who bear horns in their hands, those who bestow happiness on the world by sacrifice, glorify that Indra who recovered the cattle of the Ārya from the plunderers, who slew the enemies in battle.¹¹

The evil-disposed and stupid enemies of Sudās, crossing the flooded Paruṣṇī river, have broken its banks; but he by his greatness pervades the earth, and Kavi, the son of Cāyamāna, like a falling victim, sleeps in death.¹²

9. अर्णसि चित्प्रथान मुदास इन्द्रो गाधान्यकृणोत्सुपाग।

शर्धन्तं शिष्युमुच्छथस्य नवः शापं सिन्धूनामकृणोदशस्तीः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-5

10. पुरोळा इतुर्वशो यक्षुगसीद्राये मत्यासो निशिता अपीव।

श्रुष्टि चक्रभृगवो द्रुह्यवश्च सखा सखायमतरद्विषुचोः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-6

11. आ पक्थासो भलानसो भनन्तालिनासो विषाणिनः शिवासः।

आ योऽनयत्सधमा आर्यस्य गव्या तृत्सुभ्यो अजगन्युधा नृन् ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-7

12. दुराध्यो अदितिं स्वेवयन्तोऽचेतसो वि जगृभे परुष्णीम्।

महाविव्यक्पृथिवीं पत्यमानः पशुष्कविरशयच्चायमानः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-8

The waters; followed their regular course to the Paruṣṇī, nor wandered beyond it: the quick courser of the king came to the accessible places, and Indra made the idly-talking enemies, with their numerous progeny, subject among men to Sudās.¹³

They who ride on parti-colored cattle, the Maruts dispatched by Prṣṇi, and recalling the engagement made by them with their friend Indra, came like cattle from the pasturage, when left without a herdsman; the exulting *Niyut* steeds brought them quickly against the foe.¹⁴

Here Indra created the Maruts for the assistance of the Rājā, who ambitious of fame, slew one-and twenty of the men on the two banks of Paruṣṇī as a well-looking priest lops the sacred grass in the chamber of sacrifice.¹⁵

You, the bearer of the thunderbolt, drowned, Śruti, Kavaṣa, Vṛddha, and afterwards Druhyu, in the waters; for they, Indra who are devoted to you, and glorify you, preferring your friendship, enjoy it.¹⁶

Indra, in his might, quickly demolished all, their strongholds, and their seven kinds of cities; he has given the dwelling of the son of Anu to Tṛtsu; may we, by propitiating Indra, conquer in battle the ill-speaking man.¹⁷

13. ईयुरर्थं न न्यर्थं परूष्णीमाशुश्वनेदभिपित्वं जगाम।

सुदास इन्द्रः सुतुकाँ अमित्रानरन्धयन्मानुपे वधिवाचः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-9

14. ईयुग्वां न यवसादगोपा यथाकृतमभि मित्रं चितासः।

पृश्निगावः पृश्निनिप्रेतितासः श्रुष्टिं चक्रुर्नियुतो रन्तयश्च ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-10

15. एकं च यो विंशतिं च श्रवस्या वैकर्णयोर्जनान्नाजा न्यस्तः।

दस्मो न सद्यन्नि शिशाति ब्रह्मः शुरः सर्गमकृणोदिन्द्र एषाम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-11

16. अथ श्रुतं कवपं वृद्धमप्स्वनु दुह्युं नि वृणगवज्रबाहुः।

वृणाना अत्र सखाय सख्यं त्वायन्तो ये अमदन्ननु त्वा ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-12

17. वि सद्यो विश्वा दुंहितान्येषाम्भुद्रः पुरः सहसा सम दर्दः।

व्यानवस्य तृत्सवे गयं भाग्जेष्म पूरुं विदथे मृद्धवाचम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-13

The warriors of the Anus and Druhyus, intending to carry off the cattle, hostile to the pious Sudās, perished to the number of sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty; such are all the glorious acts of Indra.¹⁸

Those hostile Trtsus, ignorantly contending with Indra, fled routed as rapidly as rivers on a downward course, and being discomfitted, abandoned all their possessions to Sudās.¹⁹

Indra has scattered over the earth the hostile rival of the hero Sudās the senior of Indra, the appropriator of the oblation ; Indra has battled the wrath of the wrathful enemy, and the (foe) advancing on the way against Sudās has taken the faith of flight.²⁰

Indra has effected a valuable donation by a pauper; he has slain an old lion by a goat; he has cut the angles of the sacrificial post with a needle; he has given all the spoils of the enemy to Sudās.²¹

Your numerous enemies, Indra, have been reduced to subjection; effect at some time or other the subjugation of the turbulent Bheda, who holds men praising you as guilty of wickedness; hurl, Indra, your sharp thunderbolt against him.²²

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18. नि गव्यवोऽनवो दुद्यावश्च पष्टिः शाता मुषुपुः पट् सहस्रा ।
पष्टिर्वारासो अथि पट् दुवोयु विश्वेदिन्द्रस्य वीर्या कृतानि ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-14
 19. इन्द्रेणैते तृत्सवो वेविपाणा आपो न सृष्टा अधवन्त नीचीः ।
दुर्मित्रासः प्रकलविन्मिमाना जहुर्विश्वानि भोजना सुदासे ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-15
 20. अर्धं वीरस्य शृतपामनिन्द्रं परा शर्धत्तं नुनुदे अभि क्षाम् ।
इन्द्रो मन्युष्यो मिमाय भेजे पथो वर्तनि पत्यमानः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-16
 21. आर्थेण चित्तद्वेकं चकार सिंहां चित्पेत्वेना जघान ।
अव स्वक्तिर्वेश्यावृश्चिदिन्द्रः प्रायच्छद्विश्वा भोजना सुदासे ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-17
 22. शश्वन्तो हि शत्रवो गग्धुष्टे भेदस्य चिच्छर्धतो विन्द रस्थिम् ।
मातौ एनः स्तुवतो यः कृणोति तिग्मं तस्मिन्नि जही वज्रमिन्द ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-18
 23. आवदिन्द्रं यमुना तृत्सश्च प्रात्र भेदं सर्वताता मु, अपायत् ।
अजासश्च शिग्रवो यक्षवश्च बलिं शीर्पणि जध्रुरश्व्यानि ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-19

The dwellers on the Yamunā and Tr̄tsus glorified Indra when he killed Bheda in battle; the Ajās, the Śigrus, the Yakṣus, offered to him as a sacrifice the heads of the horses killed in the combat.²³

Yours favours, Indra and your bounties, whether old or new cannot be counted like the recurring dawns; you have slain Devaka, the son of Manyamāna, and of your own will have cast down Śambara from the west mountain.²⁴

Parāśara, the destroyer of hundreds of Rākṣasās, and Vasiṣṭha they who devoted to you, have glorified you in every dwelling, neglect not the friendship of you, (their) benefactor; therefore prosperous days dawn upon the pious.²⁵

Praising the liberality of Sudās, the grandson of Devavata, the son of Paijavana, the donor of two hundred cows, and of two chariots with two wives, I worthy of the gift, circumambulate you Agni, like the ministrant priest in the chamber.²⁶

Four horses, having golden trappings, going steadily on a difficult road, celebrated on the earth, the excellent and acceptable gifts made to me by Sudās, the son of the Paijavana, bear me as a son to obtain food and progeny.²⁷

24. न त इन्द्रं सुमतयो न रायः संचक्षे पूर्वा उपसो न नूलाः।
देवकं चिन्मान्यमानं जघन्ताव त्मना बृहतः शम्बरं भेत् ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-20
25. प्रये ग्रहादममदुस्त्वाया पराशरः शतयातुर्वसिष्ठः।
न ते भोजस्य सख्यं मृपन्ताधा सूरिभ्यः सुदिना व्युच्छान् ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-21
26. द्वे नसुर्देववतः शते गोद्वा रथा वधूमन्ता सुदासः।
अर्हन्नग्ने पैजवानस्य दानं होतेव सद्य पर्येमि रेभन् ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-22
27. चत्वारो मा पैजवानस्य दानाः स्मद्दिष्टयः कृशनिनो निरेके।
रुज्जासो मा पृथिविष्टाः सुदासस्तोकं तोकाय श्रवसे वहन्ति ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-23

The seven worlds praise Sudās as if he was Indra; him whose fame spreads through the spacious heaven and earth; who, munificent, has distributed wealth on every eminent person, and for whom the flowing rivers have destroyed Yudhyamadhi; in war.²⁸

Maruts, leader of rites, attend upon this prince as you did upon Divodāsa, the father of Sudās, favour the prayers of the devout son of Pijavana and may his strength be unimpaired, undecaying.²⁹

The nineteenth hymn of the seventh *Maṇḍala*, in three *mantras* offers the description in which, Indra is said to have shown favour to Sudās and Turvaśa and Yādava. The relevant *mantras* are as follows:

Undaunted (Indra), you, have protected with all your protections Sudās, the offerer of oblations, you have protected in battles with enemies for the possession of the earth, Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, and Puru.³⁰

Your favours, Indra, to Sudās, the donor of offerings, the presenter of oblations infinite; showerer of benefits, I yoke you for your vigorous steeds, may our prayers reach you who are mighty to whom many rites are addressed.³¹

May we, Maghavan, leaders in your adoration, regarded as dear friends, be happy in our homes; about to bestow felicity upon Atithigvan, humiliate Turvaśa; humiliate the son of Yadu.³²

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28. यस्य श्रवो रोदसि अन्तरूर्वीं शीर्षेशीर्षे विब्भाज विभक्ता।
सप्तेदिन्दं न स्वतो गृणन्ति नि युध्यामधिमशिशादभीके॥ *Rv.* VII-18-24
29. इमं नरो मरुतः सश्छतानु दिवोदासं न पितरं सुदासः।
अविष्टनां पैजवानस्य केतं दुणाशं क्षत्रमजरं दुवोयुः॥ *Rv.* VII-18-25
30. त्वं धृष्णो धृष्टा वीतहव्यं प्रावो विश्वाभिरुतिभिः सुदासम्।
प्र पौरुकुत्सिं त्रसदयुमावः क्षोत्रसाता वृत्रहत्येषु पूरुम्॥ *Rv.* VII-19-3
31. सना ता त इन्द्र भोजनानि गतहव्याय दाशुषै सुदासे।
वृष्णे ते हरी वृष्णा युनज्मि व्यन्तु ब्रह्मणि पुरुषाक वाजम्॥ *Rv.* VII-19-6
32. प्रियास इते मधवन्नभिष्ठौ नरो मदेम शरणे सखायः।
नि तुर्वशं नि यद्रां शिशीहृतिश्चिग्वाय शंस्यं करिष्यन्॥ *Rv.* VII-19-8

Another hymn (VII-33-1 to 6) in the *Rgveda* deals with *Dāśarājñā* war. The glorious role played by Vasiṣṭha in this war is prominent. It is said that the victory in the war was achieved through the priestly services of Vasiṣṭha. The warriors are shown as completely dependent on their priest Vasiṣṭha. He prayed to Indra to help them and defeat their enemies. The dress and habits of the Tr̄tsus people are also described. Those *mantras* as under :

The white-complexioned accomplishers of holy ceremonies, wearing the lock of the hair on the right side, have afforded me delight, when, rising up, I call the leaders of rites to the sacred grass; the Vasiṣṭhas, My son should never be far from me.³³

Disgracing Paśadyumna, they brought from afar the fierce Indra, when drinking the ladle of Soma at his sacrifice, to receive the libation of Sudās ; Indra hastened from the effused Soma of Paśadhyumna, the son of Vayata to the Vasiṣṭas.³⁴

In the same manner was Sudās, enabled by them easily to cross the Sindhu river ; in the same manner, through them he easily slew his foes so in like manner, Vasiṣṭas, through your prayers did Indra defend Sudās in the war with the ten kings.³⁵

By your prayers, leaders of rites is effected the gratification of your progenitors; I have set in mention the axle of the chariot; be not

33. श्वत्यज्वो मा दक्षिणतस्कर्पदं धियंजिन्वासो अभि हि प्रमन्दुः।

उत्तिष्ठन्वोचे परि बर्हिषो नृन् मे दूरादवितवे वसिष्टाः॥ *Rv.* VII-33-1

34. दूरादिन्द्रमनयन्ना सुतेन तिरो वैशन्तमति पान्तमुग्रम्।

पाशद्युम्नस्य वायतस्य सोमोत्सुतादिद्वोऽवृणीता वसिष्टान्॥ *Rv.* VII-33-2

35. एवेन्मु कं सिन्धुमेभिस्ततारेवेन्मु कं भेदमेभिर्जघान।

एवेन्मु कं दाशगजे सुधासं प्रावदिन्द्रो ब्रह्मणा वो वसिष्टाः॥ *Rv.* VII-33-3

you inert, for by your sacred meters, Vasiṣṭas (chaunted) with a loud voice, you sustain vigour in Indra.³⁶

Suffering from thirst, soliciting rain, supported by Tr̄tsus in the war with the ten kings, the Vasiṣṭhas made Indra radiant as the son ; Indra heard the praises of Vasiṣṭhs glorifying him and bestowed a spacious region on the Tr̄tsus.³⁷

The Bharatas, inferior to their foes, where shorn of their positions, like the staves for driving cattle, stripped of their leaves and branches; but Vasiṣṭha became their family priest, and the people of the Tr̄tsus prospered.³⁸

In the *Rgveda*, VII-83 is the third hymn in this regard. Only first eight *mantras* of the hymn describe the events of the *Dāśarājñā* war. The twin deities Indra and Varuna, are invoked by Vasiṣṭha. Sudās fought against both Dāsa group and Āryan group. The Tr̄tsus provided immense help to the Bharatas. The description there in this hymn is as follows:

Indra and Varuṇa, leaders of rites, contemplating your affinity and desirous of cattle, the worshippers, armed with large sickles, have proceeded to the east to cut the sacred grass; destroy, Indra and Varuna your enemies, whether Dāsas or Āryas and defend Sudās with your protection.³⁹

36. जुष्टी नरो ब्रह्मणा वः पितृणामक्षमव्ययं न किला रिषाथ ।

यच्छक्वरीषु बृहता रवेणोन्दे शुष्ममदधाता वसिष्ठाः ॥ *Rv.* VII-33-4

37. उद्यामिवेत्तुष्णजो नाथितासोऽदिधर्युर्दाशराज्ञे वृतासः ।

वसिष्ठस्य स्तुवता इन्द्रो अश्रोदुरुं तृत्युभ्यो अकृणोदु लोकम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-33-5

38. दण्डा इवेद्ग्रोअजनास आसन्यरिच्छिन्ना भरता अर्भकासः ।

अभवच्छ पुरएता वसिष्ठ आदितृत्सूनां विशो अप्रथन्त ॥ *Rv.* VII-33-6

39. युवां नरा पश्यमानस आप्यं प्राचा गव्यन्तः प्रथुपर्श्वो ययुः ।

दासा च वृत्रा हतमार्याणी च सुदासमिनद्रावरुणावसावतम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-83-1

Where men assemble with uplifted banners, in whatever conflict, there is some thing unfavourable; where living beings, looking to heaven are in fear, there Indra and Varuṇa, speak to us (encouragement).⁴⁰

The ends of the earth are beheld laid waste; the clamour has ascended, Indra and Varuṇa, to heaven; the adversaries of my people approach me; having heard my invocation, come for my defiance.⁴¹

Indra and Varuṇa, you protect Sudāś, overwhelming the yet unassailed Bheda with your fatal weapons; hear the prayers of these Tr̄tsus in the time of battle, so that my ministration may have borne them fruit.⁴²

Indra and Varuṇa, the murderous weapons of my enemy distress me; foes almost the malignant (assail me); you two are sovereigns over both (celestial and terrestrial) wealth ; protect us therefore on the day of battle.⁴³

Both Sudāś and Tr̄tsus call upon you two, Indra and Varuṇa in combats for the acquirement of wealth, when you defend Sudāś, together with the Tr̄tsus, when attacked by the ten kings.⁴⁴

40. यत्रा नरः समयन्ते कृतध्वजो यस्मिन्नाजा भवति किं चन प्रियम्
यत्रा भयन्ते भुवना स्वर्दुशस्तत्रा न इन्द्रावरुणाधि वोचतम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-83-2
41. सं भूप्या अन्ता ध्वसिरा अर्दुक्षतेन्द्रवरुणा दिवि घोषा आरुहत् ।
अस्तुर्जनानामुप मामरातयोऽर्वागवसा हवनश्रुता गतम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-83-3
42. इन्द्रावरुणावदनाभिरप्रति भेदं वन्वन्ता प्र सुदासमावतम् ।
ब्रह्माण्येषां शृणृतं हवीमनि सत्या तृत्सूनामभवसुरोहितः ॥ *Rv.* VII-83-4
43. इन्द्रावरुणावभ्या तपन्ति माधान्यर्थो वनुषामरातयः ।
युवं हि वस्त्र उभयस्य राजथोऽथ स्मा नोऽवतं पार्ये दिवि ॥ *Rv.* VII-83-5
44. युवां हवन्त उभयास आजिविन्द्रं च वस्त्रो वरुणं च सातये ।
यत्र राजभिर्दुशभिर्निबाधितं प्र सुदास मावतं तृत्सुभिः सह ॥ *Rv.* VII-83-6

The ten confederated irreligious kings did not prevail, Indra and Varuṇa, against Sudāś ; the praise of the leaders of rites, the offereds of sacrificial food, was fruitful ; the gods were present at their sacrifices.⁴⁵

You gave vigour, Indra and Varuṇa, to Sudāś when surrounded on all sides by the ten kings in the country where the pious Tr̄tsus, walking in whiteness and wearing braided hair, worshipped with oblations and praise.⁴⁶

Such is the description of the *Dāśarājña* war. As regards this war, H.D. Velankar⁴⁷ remarks, "we do not get here any important information about the actual fight between the two parties, but only the frustration of the attempts of the powerful enemy to overpower Sudāś and his Bharatas" Highlighting the reason for *Dāśarājña* war, he further says, "the *Dāśarājña* war was a result of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice; the chiefs and kings who were defeated in the course of the triumphant march of the sacrificial horse saw an opportunity of winning back their freedom and wielded war against Sudas."⁴⁸ Those relevant *mantras* as under:

"Approach, Kuśikas, the stead of Sudāś; animate him, and let him loose to win riches for the Rāja; for the king (of gods) has slain Vṛtra in the East, in the west, in the North, therefore let Sudāś worship him in the best regions of the earth."⁴⁹

45. दश राजानः समिता अयज्यवः सुदासमिन्द्रावरुणा न युयुषुः ॥

सत्या नृणामद्वसदामुपस्तुतिर्देवा एषामभवन्देवहूतिषु ॥ *Rv.* VII-83-7

46. दाशराजे परियत्ताय विश्वतः सुदास इन्द्रावरुणावशिक्षतम् ।

श्वित्यज्चो यत्र नमसा कपर्दिनो धिया धीवन्तो असपन्त तृत्सवः । *Rv.* VII-83-8

47. H.D. Velankar, *Rgveda Mandala VII*, Bhāratīya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1963, Introduction, p-xx

48. Ibid.

49. *Rv.* III-53-11



"What do the cattle for you among the Kikatas; they yield no milk to mix with the Soma, they need not the vessel for the libation; bring them to us; bring also the wealth of the son of the usurer, and give us, Maghavan, the possessions of the low branches of the community."⁵⁰

About the identity of the Tr̄tsus, who were fought on behalf of Sudās, under the guidance of their leader Vasiṣṭha won victory for the former. Scholars put different opinions on the same. C.V. Vaidya⁵¹ remarked "These hymns from the Vasiṣṭha *Maṇḍala* show that the Vasiṣṭhas are full of memory of this battle wherein the Bharatas or Tr̄tsus, Vasiṣṭha's clan-men with their king Sudās obtained a decisive victory on the Paruṣṇī (Rāvi) by the help of the prayers of the Vasiṣṭhas the priest of Bharatas". H.D. Velankar⁵² holds that "the Vasiṣṭhas were known as Tr̄tsus before the advent of the great Vasiṣṭha or in other words, Tr̄tsus was the earlier name of the family of the Vasiṣṭhas." He further declares that "The Tr̄tsus were family-priests of the Bharatas before the *Dāśarājñā* war and that Vasiṣṭha who was the most prominent among them gave his name to them thereafter."

50. कि ते कृष्णन्ति कीकटेषु गावो नाशिरं दुहे न तपन्ति धर्मम्।

आ नो भर प्रमगन्दस्य वेदो नैचाशाखं मधवत्रन्थया नः ॥ *Rv.* III-53-14

51. C.V. Vaidya, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Poona, 1929, p-113

52. H.D. Velankar, *Rgveda Maṇḍala VII*, Intro, pp-XXVII, XXIX

2. Rgvedic Tribes

Pañca-Janās

The word *Pañca-janāḥ* generally means five peoples. But, technically the term *Pañca-janāḥ* in *Rgveda* refers to the varieties of people as *Pañca-kṛṣṭayah* and *Pañca-carsṇīḥ*,¹ both suggesting the tilling masses. ($\sqrt{kṛṣ}$ - to till). Aupamanyava, an earlier teacher than Yāska, states that it denotes the four *Varnas*, and in addition to this, the *Niśadas* as the fifth caste.² But this interpretation appears to be not sound. Because, the four castes have certainly been mentioned clearly but only once in the tenth *Mandala* of the *Rgveda* (X-90).³ Which ofcourse is said by western scholars, to be a later origin. Yāska thinks that the *Pañca-janāḥ* are the Gandharvas, Pitṛs, Devas, Asurās and Rākṣasas.⁴ A passage from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* says that *Aditis Pañca-janāḥ*; and another passage therefrom conveys that it means the Devās, Manusyas, Gandhrvas-Apsarases, Sarpas and the Manes.⁵ The Gandharvas and the Apsarases are taken as one category.

The *Rgveda* indicates that the five tribes were Aryans, as Agni is closely associated with them.⁶ According to the *Śatapatha*

1. पञ्चजनाः । - *Rv.* III-37-9; 59-8; VIII-32-22; IX-65-23; X-45-6
पञ्चकृष्टयः । - *Rv.* II-2-10; III-53-16; IV-38-10; X-60-4; 119-6
पञ्चर्षणयः । - *Rv.* V-86-2; VII-15-2; IX-101-9
2. पञ्चजना मम होत्रं जुषध्वम् ।
चत्वारो वर्णा निषादः पञ्चमः इत्यौपमन्यवः ॥ Yāska, *Nirukta*, III-8
3. ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीत् ब्राहू राजन्यः कृतः ।
ऊरु तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पदूभ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥ *Rv.* X-90-12
4. गन्धर्वाः पितरो देवाः असुरा रक्षांसितेके ॥ Yāska, *Nirukta*, III-8
5. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, III-31
6. ऊर्जाद उत यज्ञियासः पञ्च जना मम होत्रं जुषध्वम् ॥ *Rv.* X-53-4

Brāhmaṇa, the *Pañca-janāḥ* is that which could not achieve the glory of Bharata.⁷ In the same context, it suggests a difference between the Bharatas on the one hand, and the five or seven tribes on the other. Probably, this is on the back-ground of the *Dāśarājña* war, wherein these were arrayed against Sudās-Bharatas. Generally, the Vedic texts suggest that the term *Pañca-janāḥ* indicates the Āryan tribes themselves; and they are Anu, Druhyu, Yadu, Turvaśa and Puru ; all these are mentioned in the *Rgveda*, but not in association with term *Pañca-janāḥ*. In the *Rgveda*, Yadu and Turvaśa are mentioned together.⁸ Besides, the Matsyas and the Bhṛgus are also included in the same context; thus the groups of tribes during Rgvedic age would be seven.⁹

The details regarding the Rgvedic tribes may be as below :

Anu :

The tribe of Anus is referred to alongwith the Yadus, Druhyus, Turvaśas and the Purus, in the hymn addressed to Indra and Agni both.¹⁰ Such references are found often in the *Rgveda*.¹¹ They fought against the Sudās, but were defeated by the latter.¹² They hid themselves in the waters of Paruṣṇī or present Rāvi.¹³

7. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-14

8. तुर्वशं यदुम् । *Rv.* I-174-9 तुर्वशा यदू । IV-30-17

9. पुरोळा इत्तुर्वशा यक्षुरासीद्रायो मत्यासो निशिता अपीव ।

शुष्टि॑ चक्र॒र्भग्वो दुह्यवश्च सखा सखायमतरद्विषूचोः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-6

10. यदिन्द्राग्नी यदुषु तुर्वशेषु यद्दुह्युष्वनुषु पूरुषस्थः ।

अतः परिवृष्णावा हियातथा सोमस्य पिबतं सुतस्य ॥ *Rv.* I-108-8

11. *Rv.* VII-18-14 ; VIII-10-5 etc.

12. नि गव्यवोऽनवो दुह्यवश्च षष्ठिः शाता सुषुपुः षट् सहस्रा ।

षष्ठिर्वारासो अधि षड् दुवोयु विश्वेदिन्द्रस्य वीर्या कृतानि ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-14

13. सत्यमित्वा महेनदी परुष्यव देदिशम् ।

नेमापो अश्वदातरः शविष्टादस्ति मर्त्यः । *Rv.* VIII-74-15

Druhyu :

The Druhyus are said to be one among the famous tribes of *Pañca-janah*.¹⁴ In the Sudās' victory, as the hymns from the *Rgveda* declare, the Druhyus are recorded to have been defeated by king Sudās, and perished in the water.¹⁵ They are associated with the river Paruṣṇī.¹⁶ They seem to be the inhabitants of the north-west India. The *Purāṇas*¹⁷ also refer to Gandhāra dynasty as the descendants of Druhyus.

Turvaśa :

The tribe Turvaśa is frequently mentioned in the *Rgveda*. They are closely described with their allies Yadu, Anus, Purus, and Druhyus.¹⁸ Moreover, the Turvaśas are generally mentioned with the Yadus, in the *Rgveda*.¹⁹ Two passages of the *Rgveda*, refer to an attack by Turvaśa and Yadu on Divodāsa.²⁰ The Turvaśas people took part in the famous *Dāśarājña* war against the Sudās and defeated their allies. One *mantra* in the *Rgveda* refers to the defeat of the Turvaśa at the hands of the Śrñjayas.²¹ The bank of Paruṣṇī is the home of the Turvaśas at the time of their conflict with the Sudās. They crossed the Paruṣṇī, but the direction of their crossing, is not mentioned.²²

14. *Rv.* I-108-8

15. *Rv.* VII-18

16. दुराद्यो अदिति स्वेवयन्तोऽचेतसो वि जग्रभे परुष्णीम्। *Rv.*-VII-18-8

17. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 48-6; *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99-9

18. *Rv.* I-108-8

19. *Rv.* I-36-18; 54-6; 174-9; VI-20-12; etc

20. य आनयत्परावतः सुनीती तुर्वशं यदुम्। *Rv.* VI-45-1

पुरः सद्य इत्थाधिये दिवोदासाय शम्बरम्। अधत्यं तुर्वशम् यदुम्। ||IX-61-2

21. यस्य गवापरुषा सूयवस्यू अन्तरुषु चरतो रेरिहाण।

स सृज्याय तुर्वशं परादादवृचीवतो दैववताय शिक्षन्। *Rv.* VI-27-7

22. *Rv.* VII-18

Yadu :

The term Yadu mentioned often in the *Rgveda*, denotes, the name of the king and his group of people. They are mentioned as coupled with Turvaśa. They fought against the Sudās with their allies Turvaśa, Anus, Purus and the Druhyus.²⁴ They were defeated by the Sudās.²⁵ The Yadu and the Turvaśa kings seem to have escaped, while the Anu and the Druhyu kings perished.

Puru :

It signifies the name of a tribe and their king. The Purus are mentioned in the *Rgveda* with the Anus, Druhyus, Turvaśas and the Yadus.²⁶ They are referred to as the enemies of Sudās in the *Rgveda*.²⁷ As said in the *Rgveda*, due to Agni's favour, the Bharatas became celebrated as victorious over the Purus.²⁸ On the other hand, the victory of the Purus over the Dasyus is mentioned in the several mantras of the *Rgveda*.²⁹ Purukutsa and the Trasadsyu are the great kings of this tribe.³⁰ Probably the Kurus and Purus are found to be the two families connected with the Rgvedic time.³¹ The Purus may be said as living on the bank of river Sarasvatī.³²

23. तुर्वशं यदुम् | *Rv.* I-174-9 ; तुर्वशा यदू | IV-30-17

24. *Rv.* I-108-8

25. *Rv.* VII-18-14

26. *Rv.* I-108-8

27. *Rv.* VII-18

28. प्रप्रायमग्नीर्भरतस्य शृण्वे वि यत्सूर्यो न रोचते बृहद्दाः।

अभि यः पुरुं पृतनासु तस्थौ द्युतानो दैव्यो अतिथिः शुशोच ॥ *Rv.* VII-8-4

29. *Rgveda Mandala*, I, IV, VI and VII

30. सनेम तेऽवसा नव्य इन्द्रं प्र पूरवः स्तवन्त एना यज्ञैः।

सप्ता यत्पुरः शर्म शारदीर्द्धन्दासीः पुरुकुत्साय शिक्षन् ॥ *Rv.* VI-20-10

31. कुरुश्रवणमावृणि राजानां त्रासदस्यवम् | *Rv.* X-33-4

32. *Rv.* VII-96-1,2

सरस्वतीमिन्महया सुवृक्तिभिः स्तोर्मैर्वसिष्ट रोदसी ।

उभे यत्ते महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षियन्ति पूरवः ॥

Bharata :

The Bharatas form an important tribe, designating Aryan tribes during the period of the *Rgveda*. In the *Apri* hymns, occurs a goddess Bhāratī—the personified deity, the protective power of the Bharata tribe. Sudāś was the ruler of the Bharatas. Viśvāmitra, his contemporary, was also a Bharata.³⁴ Vasiṣṭha, who was the leader of the Tr̄tsus, also belonged to the Bharatas as their priest.³⁵ The Tr̄tsus also seem to be a sub-tribe among the Bharatas. The Bharatas fought against the *Dāśarājñā* kings, under the leadership of Sudāś, and Vasiṣṭha also was there with them in defeating *Dāśarājñā* by the favour of Indra. They are mentioned mostly in the third and the seventh *Mandalas* as associated with Divodāsa also.³⁷ Bharatas had settled on the banks of the rivers Sarasvatī, Āpayā and Dr̄śadvatī,³⁸ which is called middle region of the famous Madhyadeśa. The Bharatas became very famous in the later literature. In the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*,³⁹ the Bharata kings are recorded to have won victories over the Kāsi and made offerings over the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Macdonell and Keith writes -

33. आ भारती भारतीभिः सजोषा इळा देवैर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः।
सरस्वती सारस्वतेभिरवर्क् तिस्रो देविर्बहिरदं सदन्तु ॥ *Rv.* III-4-8
34. विश्वामित्रस्य रक्षति ब्रह्मेदं भारतं जनम् ॥ *Rv.* III-53-12
विश्वामित्रो यदवहत्सुदासमप्रियायत कुशिकेभिरन्द्रः ॥ *Rv.* III-53-9
III-53-24 ; III-33-11, 12 etc.
35. दण्डाङ्गोद्रो अजनास आसन्परिच्छिन्ना भरता अर्भकासः।
अभवच्य पुरएता वसिष्ट आदित्रृत्सूनां विशो अप्रथन्त ॥ *Rv.* VI-33-6
36. *Rv.* III-53; VII-18 ; 33 and 83
37. त्वमीले अथ द्विता भरतो वाजिभिः शुनम् । इंजे यज्ञेषु यज्ञियम् ॥ *Rv.* VI-16-4
त्वमिमा वार्या पुरु दिवोदासाय सुन्वते । भरद्वाजाय दाशुषे ॥ *Rv.* VI-16-5
38. दुषद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दीदीहि ॥ *Rv.* III-23-4
39. *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-54-11-1

'moreover, in the formula of the kings proclamation for the people, the variants recorded include *Kuravaḥ*, *Pāñcālāḥ*, *Kuru-Pāñcālāḥ*, and *Bharataḥ*;⁴⁰ the *Mahābhārata* consistently recognizes the royal family of the Kurus as a Bharata family. It is therefore extremely probable that Oldenberg is right in holding that the Bharatas in the times of the *Brāhmaṇas* were merging in the Kuru-Pāñcāla people.'⁴¹ They ruled over a vast tract of this country on any account an important chapter in the social and political history of India for a long time. Perhaps, this is the cause that the name of our country came to be known a *Bharatavarṣa*.

Krivi :

In the *Rgveda*⁴² the Krivis are said to have settled on the banks of the rivers Sindhu and Asiknī (Cenab). This Krivi tribe in the later literature was the former name of the Pāñcālās. The *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa* says that - कृव्य इति ह पुरा पाञ्चालान आचक्षते।⁴³ Here a king is referred to as *Krvya-Pāñcāla*. Macdonell and Keith, consider Krivi to be a variant of Kuru.⁴⁴ According to Zimmer,⁴⁵ the Krivis and the Kurus formed the later tribe known Vaikarnas.

Vaikarna :

The Vaikarnas are already mentioned in the *Rgveda*, as having fought against the king Sudās of the Bharata.⁴⁶ In this view, U.C.

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- 40. The *Vājasaneyī Samhitā* in the Kanva recension XI-3-3;6,3 has, *Kuravaḥ*, *Pāñcālāḥ* evidently as a joint people; *Āpastambha*, XVIII-12-7 gives *Bharataḥ*, *Kuravaḥ*, *Pāñcalāḥ*, *Kuru-Pāñcālāḥ* and *Janatāḥ*, as alternatives, according to the people to whom the king belongs. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-96
 - 41. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-96
 - 42. याभिः सिद्ध्यमवथ याभिस्तूर्वथ याभिर्दशस्यथा क्रिविम् । Rv. VIII-20-24
 - 43. *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-7
 - 44. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p.166
 - 45. *Altindische Leben*, p-103
 - 46. श्रवस्या वैकर्णायोर्जनात्राजा न्यस्तः । Rv. VII-18-11

Sharma concludes -'Actually, the Bharatas, Kurus, Pāñcālās, Krivis etc., belonged to the same stock which in various divided groups, were referred to with different names in the different times.'⁴⁷

Kuru :

The *Rgveda* mentions the name of Kuruśravāṇa. Kuruśravāṇa is mentioned as a prince with the epithet Trāsadasyava,⁴⁸ i.e. the descendent of Trasadasyu. But Trasadasyu is well known as a Puru king.⁴⁴ The Purus and the Bharatas are spoken of as kindling fire on the Dr̥ṣadvatī, the Āpayā and the Sarasvatī.⁵⁰ The *Atharvaveda*⁵¹ mentions Parikṣit as a king of the Kurus, and praises him. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁵² Kuru-Pāñcālās are said to be inhabitants of the Madhyadeśa.

Tṛtsu :

The Tṛtsus are referred to in the *Rgveda* in several places.⁵³ They were one of the most important tribes connected with the Dāśarājñā war. They helped king Sudās in his battle with the Dāśarājñā.⁵⁴ The *Rgveda* speaks of the alliance of the Tṛtsus with the Bharatas under the leadership of Vasiṣṭha, the priest of the Tṛtsus.⁵⁵ It is difficult to determine the relationship between the Tṛtsus and the Bharatas. But they seem to be actually the priests of

47. U.C. Sharma. *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭhas*, p.284

48. कुरुश्वरणमावृणि राजानं त्रासदस्यवम् । मंहिष्टं वाघतामृषिः ॥ *Rv.* X-33-4

49. उतो हि वां दात्रा सन्ति पूर्वा या पुरुभ्यस्त्रासदस्युनितोश । *Rv.* IV-38-1

50. दुषद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दीदीहि ॥ *Rv.* III-23-4
इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध । *Rv.* III-23-5

51. *Atharvaveda*, XX-127-7

52. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4

53. *Rv.* VII-18-7, 13,15,19;VII-33-5,6; VII-83-4, 6,8 etc.

54. *Rv.* VII-18-6, 7

55. अभवच्च पुरएता वसिष्ठ आदित्यसूनां विशो अप्रथन्त ॥ *Rv.* VII-33-6

the Bharatas and can be identified with the Vasiṣṭhas. Moreover, they could not be supposed to be a tribe distinctly apart from the Bharatas. At one place in the *Rgveda*, the Tr̄tsus are described as having braided hair on the right side of the head.⁵⁶ In another *mantra*, they seem to represent the Vasiṣṭhas.⁵⁷ Hence the identity of the two tribes can be inferred.

Matsya :

The tribe called Matsya is mentioned in the *Rgveda* as the people who fought against Sudās in the *Dāsarājña* war.⁵⁸ Later Vedic texts mention this tribe many times. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁵⁹ refers to a king of the Matsyas named Dhvaṣan Dvaitavana as he ruled near the lake of Dvaitavana. The *Kausītaki Upaniṣad*⁶⁰ mentions the Matsyas with the Vaśas, and the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*⁶¹ with the Śalvas. According to the *Manusmṛti*,⁶² it is said that the Matsyas lived in the Madhyadeśa which comes between Himalaya and Vindhya mountain, and it had its extension upto the bank of Sarasvatī, which is now disappeared. The Matsyas stayed in the vicinity of the Kurukṣetra, the Pāñcālās and the Śūrasenas. This Madhyadeśa now includes the places of modern Alwar, Bharatpur and Jaipur.

56. श्वित्यज्ञो मा दक्षिणतस्कपर्दा धियंजिन्वासो अभि हि प्रमन्तुः। *Rv.* VII-33-1 compare with

57. श्वित्यज्ञो यत्र नमसा कपर्दिनो धिया धीवन्तो असपन्त तृत्सवः॥ *Rv.* VII-83-8

58. *Rv.* VII -18-6

59. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4,9

60. *Kausītaki Upaniṣad*, IV-1

61. *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-2-9

62. कुरुक्षेत्रज्ञ मत्याश्च पाञ्चालाः शूरसेनकाः ।

एष ब्रह्मिदेशो वै ब्रह्मावर्तादनंतरः॥ *Manusmṛti*, II-19

कुरुक्षेत्रांश्च मत्यांश्च पाञ्चालात् शूरसेनजाम् ।

दीघालघूञ्चैव नरानग्रानिकेषु योजयेत् ॥ *Ibid.* VII-193

Srñjaya :

The *Rgveda* faintly refers to the tribe Srñjaya. Their king Daivavāta is said to have defeted the Vṛcīvanta and Turvaśa king.⁶³ Thus both Sudās of Bharatas and the Srñjayas were enemies of Turvaśa.⁶⁴ Again, the *Rgveda*⁶⁵ celebrates Divodāsa and a Srñjaya prince together. Both the references point alliance between the Tr̄tsus and Srñjayas. But the Srñjayas and the Bharatas got assimilated, as both are mentioned in the same ‘*Dānastutis*.’⁶⁶ In the later period, as *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁶⁷ declares, there who friendly relation between Srañjayas and Kurus. It said that Devabhāga Śrautarṣa was the priest of both the Kurus and the Srñjayas. The geographical position of the Srñjayas is uncertain. They may have stayed with their allies, the Tr̄tsus in the Madhyadeśa.

Pārāvata :

Pārāvata occurs in several *mantras* of the *Rgveda*. A *mantra*⁶⁸ invokes Sarasvatī and reads the epithet- *Pārāvatagni* for her. The varied forms and other specialties of the Pārāvatas are referred in the *Rgveda*.⁶⁹ The *Rgveda*,⁷⁰ again makes a mention of the fine

63. *Rv. VI-27-7*

64. *Rv. VII-18-6*

65. प्रस्तोक इन्द्रु राधसस्त इन्द्र दश कोशयीर्दश वाजिनोऽदात् ।
दिवोदासादतिथिगवस्य राधः शाम्बरं वसु प्रत्यग्रभीष्म ॥ *Rv. VI-47-22*
मही राधो विश्वजन्यं दधानान्भरद्वाजान्त्सार्जयो अभ्ययष्ट ॥ VI-47-25

66. *Rv. VI-47-23, 25*

67. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II-4-4-5

68. इयं शुष्मेभिर्बिसखाइवारुजत्सानु गिरीणां तविषेभिरूर्मिभिः ।
पारावतान्नीमवसे सुवृक्तिभिः सरस्वतीमा विवासेम धीतिभिः ॥ *Rv. VI-61-2*

69. अथा पारावता इति चित्रारुपाणि दश्या । *Rv. V-52-11*

70. पारावतस्य रातिषु द्रवच्चक्रेष्वाशुषु । तिष्ठ वनस्य मथ्य आ ॥ *Rv. VIII-34-18*
पारावतं यत्पुरुसंभृतं वस्वपावृणोः शरभाय ऋषिबन्धवे ॥ *Rv. VIII-100-6*

steads and great riches of the people. The *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*⁷¹ mentions the Pārāvatas as staying on the bank of Sarasvatī river. The Pārāvatas, as is clear from the epithet of Sarasvatī were most probably associated with the region on the upper courses of the river Sarasvatī.

Bharadvāja :

Bharadvāja is the seer of the sixth *maṇḍala* of the *Rgveda*. The *Rgveda*⁷² mentions Br̥bu Br̥ṣaya and Pārāvata with Bharadvāja. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*⁷³ records Bharadvāja to have gained largest from Prastoka Sr̥ñjaya and thus points out a connection between the Bharadvājas and the Sr̥ñjayas. Later works, *Mahābhārata*⁷⁴ and *Purāṇas*⁷⁵ mentioned the Bharadvājas are a tribe.

Uśinara :

The *Rgveda* indirectly mentioned Uśinara people. It refers to their queen-Uśinarāṇī.⁷⁶ In the *Rgveda*, one *mantra* of a hymn of credited seer Śibi Auśinara.⁷⁷ Leter Vedic texts, the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*⁷⁸ regards both Vaśas and the Uśinaras as northerners. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁷⁹ places the people in the middle region. In

71. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, IX-4-11

72. इयमददाद्रभसमृणच्युतं दिवोदासं व्रश्चश्वाय दाशुषे ।

या शश्वन्तमाच्छादकसं पर्णि ता ते दात्राणि तविषा सरस्वति । *Rv.* VI-61-1; VI-61-2, 3 etc.

73. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XVI-11-11

74. *Mahābhārata*, *Bhīṣmaparva*, IX-68

75. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 114-43; *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 45-119 etc.

76. समिन्द्रेरय गामनङ्गाहं य आवहदुशीनराण्या अनः । *Rv.* X-59-10

77. *Rv.* X-179-1

78. शवसोशीनरेषु उदीच्येषु । *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, II-9

79. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII-14

Indian literature, the Uśīnaras are said to have associated with the Śibis and the capital town of the Śibipura. It is identified with the modern twon of Shorkot in the Jhang district.

Cedi :

The *Rgveda* mentions Cedi tribe.⁸⁰ Their king Kaśu Caidya was celebrated with the unparalleled generosity of the Cedis as found in the *Dānastuti*. They are referred later to in the epic period with the Matsyas ; and they lived in Bandela Khanda.

Ruśama :

The *Rgveda* mentions this tribe with their generous king Rñamcaya.⁸¹ Ruśama is mentioned in the *Rgveda* thrice as a protégé of Indra.⁸² The *Atharvaveda* mentions them with their king Kaurama.⁸³

Varaśikha :

It is the name of a leader of a tribe. This tribe is recorded to have been defeated by Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna, in the *Rgveda*.⁸⁴ Abhyāvarthin Chāyamāna has been referred to as Pārthava or the king Pṛthu.

80. यथाचिच्चैद्यः कशुः शतमुष्टानां ददत् सहस्रा दश गोनाम् । *Rv.* VIII-5-37

माकिरेना पथा गाथ्येनेमे यन्ति चेदयः । अन्यो नेत्सूरिरोहते भूरिदावत्तरो जनः ॥ *Rv.* VIII-5-39

81. *Rv.* V-30-12, 15

82. शाश्वि यथा रुशमं श्यावकं कृपमिन्द्र प्रावः स्वर्णरम् । *Rv.* VIII-3-12

यद्वा रुमे रुशमे श्यावके कृप इन्द्र मादयसे सचा । *Rv.* VIII-4-2

तिरश्चिदर्ये रुशमे परीरवि तुभ्येत्सो अज्यते रयिः । *Rv.* VIII-51-9

83. *Atharvaveda*, XX-127-1

84. *Rv.* VI-27-4, 5

Ajas :

In the *Rgveda*, the Ajas are mentioned with the Yakṣus and the Śigrus.⁸⁵ They fought against king Sudās on the bank of river Yamunā under the leadership of Bheda. Ajas were defeated by the Tr̄tsus in the war of *Dāśarājñā*. Pāṇini⁸⁶ mentions Ajada as a people. Aja is the ordinary name for goat in Sanskrit. Therefore, Ajas were probably shepherd people in the *Rgvedic* time.

Śigru :

The Śigrus⁸⁷ were a tribe in the *Rgvedic* time. They fought against the Sudās accompanied by the Ajas, the Yakṣus, and the Bhedas. The Śigrus were defeated by the Tr̄tsus who fought under the leadership of Sudās in *Dāśarājñā* battle.

Yakṣu :

Yakṣu is mentioned in the *Rgveda*, both in singular and plural forms. They are described as taking in the *Dāśarājñā* battle. The Yakṣus⁸⁸ having friendship with the Ajas, the Śigrus, and under the leadership of the Bheda fought against the Sudās. The Yakṣus may be taken to be a variant of Yakṣa. The *Amarakośa*⁸⁹ speaks of Yakṣa as a branch of Devas. Probably Yakṣus may be Aryan tribe.

85. आवदिन्दं यमुना तृत्सवश्च पात्रे भेदं सर्वताता मुषायत् ।

अजासश्च शिग्रवो यक्षवश्च बलिं शीर्षाणि जभूरश्व्यानि ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-19

86. Pāṇini, IV-1-171

87. *Rv.* VII-18-19

88. *Rv.* VII-18-19

89. विद्याधरोऽप्सरोयक्षरक्षो गच्छर्व किन्नराः ।

पिशाचो गुह्यकः सद्गोभूतोऽमी देवयोनयः ॥ *Amarakośa*, I-1-10

Ed: Lewis Rice, University of Mysore, 1989, p-5

Bheda :

It is the name of a tribe and their king also.⁹⁰ They were enemies of king Sudās. Bheda was defeated by Sudās on the river Yamunā.

Kikāṭa :

The name of Kikāṭa people occurs only in one *mantra* of the *Rgveda*.⁹¹ They appear as hostile to the singer and as under the leadership of *Pramagandha*. Yāska⁹² declares Kikāṭa to be the name of a non-Aryan country. Vedic Index⁹³ says that Kikāṭa is given as a synonym of Magadha. Sudama Misra⁹⁴ comments that the Kikāṭas were primarily associated with the territories of Magadha and later on coalsced with them.

Vaikarṇa :

Vaikarṇa is mentioned only once in the description of the *Dāśarājñā*.⁹⁵ It is stated here that Sudās overthrew the twenty one tribes of the two Vaikarṇas. Nothing particular is known about the Vaikarṇas.

90. *Rv.* VII-18-18, 19; 33-3; 83-4

91. किं ते कृणवन्ति कीकटेषु गावो नाशिरं दुहे न तपन्ति धर्मम् ।
आ नो भर प्रमगदस्य वेदो नेचाशाखं मधवत्रन्धया नः ॥ *Rv.* III-53-14

92. किं ते कुर्वन्ति कीकटेषु गावः । कीकटा नाम देशोऽनार्यनिवासः । कीकटाः किंकृताः ।
किं क्रियाभिरिति प्रेप्सा वा । Yaska, *Nirukta*, VI-32

93. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-159

94. Sudhama Misra, *Janapada State in Ancient India*, p-36

95. एकं च यो विंशति च श्रवस्य वैकर्णयोर्जनान्नाजा न्यस्तः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-11

Mūjavan :

The *Rgveda*⁹⁶ says that Soma is described as Maujavata i.e coming from the Mūjavantas. Yāska⁹⁷ says that Mūjavanta as the name of a mountain. The Mūjavants were the residents of the region surrounding the Mūjavān mountain. The Rgvedic people used to obtain the Soma plant regularly from this mountain. It is probable that the people were living in the northern region at the foot of the Himālayan mountain.

Paktha :

The *Rgveda* says the Paktha as the one of the tribes. They fought against the Tr̄tsu-Bharatas in the *Dāsarājñā* battle. The Pakthas and their allies were defeated by the king Sudās on the river Paruṣṇī.⁹⁸ The Pakthas also fought against the Puru king Trasadasyu.⁹⁹ Sudama Mishra's opinion is the Pakthas seem to be the fore fathers of the modern Pakhtoons in the eastern parts of Afghanistan.¹⁰⁰

Bhalānas :

Bhalānas is also one of five tribes the Pakthas, Bhalānas, Alinas, Viṣānins and Śivas.¹⁰¹ They fought against the Sudās on the battle of *Dāsarājñā*, but were defeated by Sudās.

96. प्रावेपा मा बृहतो मादयन्ति प्रवातेजा इरिणे वर्वतानाः।

सोमस्येव मैजवतस्य भक्षो विभीदको जागृविर्मह्यमच्छन्। *Rv. X-34-1*

97. मौजवतो मूजवतस्य जातः। मूजवांग्यर्वतो मुजवान्। मुज्जोविमुच्यत इषीकया॥। Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-8

98. आ पक्थासो भलानसो भनन्तालिनासो विषाणिनः शिवासः।

आ योऽनयत्सधमा आर्यस्य गव्या तृत्सुभ्यो अजगन्युधा नृन्॥। *Rv. VII-18-7* *Rv. VII-18-7*

99. यथा कण्वे मधवन्त्रसदस्यवि यथा पक्थे दशवर्जे। *Rv. VIII-49-10*

100. Sudama Mishra, *Janapada State in Ancient India*, p.40

101. *Rv. VII-18-7*

Alina :

The Alinas are also mentioned in the *Rgveda* with their allies. The Alinas were enemies of king Sudās, in the battle of ten kings and suffered defeat.¹⁰²

Siva :

In the company of the Alinas, Pakthas, Bhalānas and Viśānins,¹⁰³ the Śivas also fought against Sudās in the battle of *Dāśarajña*. They were defeated by the Trtsu-Bharata. Dr. Agarwal puts the view that their original association seem to be with modern Baluchistan and they may be identified with the Greek *Siboi*.¹⁰⁴

Viśanin :

The Viśanin occurs once in the *Rgveda*, as one of the enemies of the Trtsu-Bharatas.¹⁰⁵ This tribe may be supposed as belonging to the north-west of Paruṣṇī. The *Vedic Index*¹⁰⁶ expresses—"the word seems to mean 'having horns,' but in what sense is unknown ; perhaps their helmets were horn-shaped or ornamented with horns."

Vṛcīvanta :

The Vṛcīvanta is referred to as being conquered by the Śrñjaya king Daivavāta who also routed, the Turvaśa king.¹⁰⁷ The people may be regarded as the fore-fathers of modern Buluchis.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Dr. V.S. Agarwala, *India as Knows to Pāṇini*, Lucknow University, 1953, p.53

105. *Rv.* VII-18-7

106. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II p.313

107. स सृज्याय तुर्वशं परादाद्वीवतो दैवताय शिक्षन् ।। *Rv.* VI-27-7

Parśu :

This tribe is mentioned with the Pr̥thu in the *Rgveda*.¹⁰⁸ Pāṇini also mentions about the Parāsus.¹⁰⁹ It is Probable that the Parāsus were associated with the north-eastern sector of Iran.

Pr̥thu :

In the *Rgveda* the Pr̥thus are mentioned with the Parāsus.¹¹⁰ Again, the *Rgveda* mentions the descendants of the Pr̥thu, the Pārthavas as generous doners.¹¹¹ It is most probable that the Pr̥thus were the fore-fathers of the Pārthins.

Gandhāri :

In the *Rgveda*, the good wool of the sheep of Gandhāris is referred to.¹¹² The *Atharvaveda* mentions with the Mūjavants, Angas, and the Magadhas.¹¹³ This group of people lived in the north-west of India. Sudhama Mishra concluded that the tribe most probably was associated with the tracts between the Indus and Kābul rivers, as the same later on became the territory of the Gandhāra Janapada.¹¹⁴

108. युवां नरा पश्यमानास आप्यं प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्श्वो ययुः। *Rv.* VII-83-1

109. Pāṇini, V-3-117

110. युवां नरा पश्यमानास आप्यं प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्श्वो ययुः। *Rv.* VII-83-1

111. द्वयाँ अग्ने रथिनो विंशतीं गा वधूमतो मधवा महां सम्राट्।

भ्यावर्तीचायमानो ददति दूणाशेयं दक्षिणा पार्थवानाम्॥ *Rv.* VI-27-8

112. सर्वाहमस्मी रोमशा गच्छारीणामिवामिका। *Rv.* I-126-7

113. *Atharvaveda*, V-22-14

114. Sudhama Mishra, *Janapada State in Ancient India*, p-40

3. The R̄gveda and the Purāṇas as Sources of Traditional History

The most important thing about which agreement between R̄gvedic and Purāṇic traditions is supposed to be lacking, is the course of Aryan expansion in India. The hymns of the *R̄gveda*, belong to the earliest period of Aryan history, plainly indicate that the Aryans were settled during that period in the territory of *Sapta-Sindhu*, later known as the Punjab. The seers of the R̄gvedic hymns show their familiarity with the smallest rivers of the *Sapta-Sindhu* region and north-west frontier, such as the Kubhā, the Krumu, the Gomati, the Sarayū, the Suvāstu, and several others. In the later Vedic literature and the Purāṇic literature, the horizon is clearly wider, and kingdoms of the Gangetic valley and northern part of the Deccan are well known. The Vedic literature thus clearly indicates that the movement of Aryans took place from the north-west of India to the east and the south.

There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the comparative value of the Vedic texts and the Purāṇas in regard to the historical data supplied by them. Macdonell says—"History is the one of weak spots in Indian literature. It is, in fact, non-existent. The total lack of the historical sense is so characteristic, that the whole course of Sanskrit literature is darkened by the shadow of this defect, suffering as it does from an entire absence of exact chronology."¹

Keith is excessively sceptical about the historical value of the Purāṇas and is doubtful regarding the historicity of any event which

1. Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, p-10

is not explicit in the *Rgveda*. He says - "that the Vedic texts, the *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* are not books of historical purpose, nor do they deal with history."²

Pargiter³ on the other hand, gives more weight to the Purāṇic tradition than to the Vedic evidence, which he styles as the tradition of the Brāhmaṇas (priests) who possessed no historical sense. The so-called Kṣatriyas' tradition, however, is hardly an unpolluted source of history. The evidence of the *Purāṇas*, on the other hand, cannot be ruled out altogether, because despite a good deal of what is untrustworthy in them, they alone contain something like a continuous historical narrative, and it is absurd to suppose that the elaborate royal genealogies were all merely figments of imagination or a tissue of falsehood.

R.C. Majumdar examine this theory and says "the theory which pronounces the *Purāṇas* as respecting Kṣatriya tradition as distinct from, and superior to, the Brāhmaṇa tradition contained in the Vedic texts, does not appear to be correct. The theory is mainly based on two assumptions:

- 1) that the heroes of the legends and stories in the *Purāṇas* are Kṣatriya kings who mostly do not figure in the Vedic literature, and
- 2) the transmission of their history was entrusted to *Sūta* of Kṣatriya origin. There is hardly any foundation for these beliefs. The *Sūta* was not a non-Brāhmaṇa but a venerable sage. As regards the so-called Kṣatriya traditions, there have never been in India

2. Keith, *JRAS*, 1914, pp-739, 1031 note

3. F.E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, Motilal Banarasidas, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7. Fully explained in Introduction chapter.

two such water-tight compartments as the Brāhmaṇa tradition and the Kṣatriya traditions. Even in the works distinctly assigned to Kṣatriya tradition by Pargiter, we find the glorification of the Brāhmaṇas and so-called Brāhmaṇic literature abounding in Kṣatriya legends. The *Purāṇas* themselves assign a comparatively small portion to genealogical accounts, the genuine Kṣtriya tradition according to Pargiter; their main bulk deals with Vedic and Brāhmaṇic lore. Moreover, the *Purāṇas* follow the Vedic religion and take pride in styling themselves as the "fifth *Veda*."⁴

Moreover, it may be observed that there is no irreconcilable contradiction or conflict between the Vedic texts and the *Purāṇas*. The *Rgveda* which deals the Kuru-Pāñcāla product is naturally historical; therefore the kings belonging to those clans play prominent roles in it, and other kings, who are mentioned in the Vedic texts, are not found in the Purāṇic traditions. There is also the possibility of the same person being referred to under different names in the two sets of traditional accounts. Some of the kings mentioned in the *Rgveda* can be fitted in the gaps in the Purāṇic lists. The *Rgveda*, no doubt, offers the proper corrective to the Purāṇic lists. It is legitimate to take their testimony as valid even in matters on which the *Rgveda* is silent. The proper procedure for the writing of traditional history is to take into account the joint testimony of the Vedic and Purāṇic texts wherever available, and to try to bring harmony into apparently conflicting texts. The evidence of the *Purāṇas* in these matters needs very careful consideration.

4. R.C. Majumdar, *The Vedic Age*, Geoge Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1951, p-305

A critical examination of the Purāṇic texts and Vedic literature reveals the fact that the Purāṇic genealogies in some cases refer to the same persons figuring in the Vedic literature. The Purāṇic data about some of the royal dynasties, kings, and the Brāhmaṇa families find confirmation in Vedic literature. There is no basis for the view that there are hardly any points of contact between the Vedic and Purāṇic tradition. Here, we shall briefly refer to the important persons who appear in both Vedic literature and *Purāṇas*.

Let us take the older records preserved in the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata* regarding the location and the movement of various dynasties.

The Saudyumna Dynasty :

The *Mahābhārata* more than once locates the famous king of this dynasty, Yayāti, on the river Sarasvatī.⁵ Yayāti's son Puru and his descendants are regarded by all the *Purāṇas* to have ruled in the same region where Yayāti ruled, because it is distinctly said that Yayāti installed Purus as his successor in the ancestral sovereignty.⁶ That is to say, if Yayāti ruled on the banks of Sarasvatī, the Purus must also have ruled on the banks of the

5. सरस्वती पुण्यतमा नदीनां तथा समुद्राः सरितः साद्रयश्च ।
ईजनाय पुण्यतमाया राजे धृतं पयो दुदुर्हन्तुषाय ॥ *Mahābhārata*, VII-63-4
तत्र यज्ञे ययातेश्च महाराज सरस्वती ।
सर्पि पयश्च सुस्त्राव नाहुषस्य महात्मनः ॥ *Mahābhārata*, IX-42-33
compare with
एका चेतत् सरस्वती नदीनां शुचिर्यती गिरिभ्यः आसमुद्रात् ।
रायश्चेततन्ति भुवनस्य भूरेधृतं पयो दुदुहे नाहुषाय । *Rv.* VII-95-2
6. अभिशिस्य ततः पुरु स्वराज्ये सुतमात्मनः । *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 93-88

same river. This is again corroborated by the *Mahābhārata*, which speaks of the Puru kings. Matināra is spoken of as having held a sacrificial session of twelve years on the bank of Sarasvati.⁷ It does not require much imagination to realise that he must not have held that long sacrificial session outside his kingdom, and that his kingdom therefore must have been situated on the banks of the Sarasvati. All this is fully in accordance with the *Rgveda* where Yayāti and his descendants, the Purus, are located on the banks of the Sarasvati.⁸

The king Yayāti had five sons, viz. Puru, Anu, Druhyu, Yadu, and Turvaśu.⁹ However, these names occur in the *Rgveda* as those of ancient tribes.¹⁰ According to the *Purāṇas*,¹¹ they have obtained territories in the neighbourhood of the ancestral kingdom. It is remarkable that the sons, except Turvaśu, are placed in the north or west of the ancestral kingdom. As the ancestral kingdom was situated on the banks of the Sarasvati, the north-western region naturally covered the land of the five rivers. Thus, Anu is said to have got the north, Druhyu is the west, and Yadu is the South-West. Various facts preserved in the *Rgveda*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*, confirm the location of the Anus, Druhyus and the Yadus, respectively which later came to be called Punjab.

7. *Mahābhārata*, I-63-26 : I-95-26

8. उभे यत्ते महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षियन्ती पूरवः। *Rv.* VII-96-2

9. यदिद्वाग्नि यदुषु तुर्वशेषु यदुहुष्वनुषु पुरुषस्थः। *Rv.* I-108-8

10. ऊर्जाद उत यज्ञियासः पञ्चजना मम होत्रं जुषद्वम्॥ *Rv.* X-53-4

11. अभिषिच्य ततः पुरुं स्वराज्ये सुतात्मनः।
दिशी दक्षिणपूर्वस्यां तुर्वशुं तु न्यवेशयत्॥
दक्षिणापरतो राजा यदुं ज्येष्ठं न्यवेशयत्।

प्रतीचामुत्तरस्यां द्विहुंचानुं च तातु भौ॥ *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 93-88,90

Thus, taking the Yadus first, the *Rgveda* mentions their raid on the river Sarayū,¹² which was affluent to the Gomati, a western tributary of the Indus. The *Mahābhārata* says that the Yādava princess Lopāmudrā married Agastya at a great place which is called ‘Agstya-tīrta’ on the bank of the river Sindhu.¹³ These statements clearly imply that the Yādavas lived somewhere on the western confines of the land of the five rivers. As for the Druhyus, the fact that according to the Purāṇas one of them gave his name to the country of Gāndhāra,¹⁴ makes it easy to understand that they ruled in the north-west part of land of the five rivers. The Anus are rightly placed to the north of the Paurava territory. According to the *Rgveda*, the Anus dwelt on the banks of the Paruṣṇī. The fact that Indra is said to have given away the possession of the Anu king, to the Tr̄tsus in the battle of Paruṣṇī.¹⁵ It shows that the Anus dwelt on the bank of the Paruṣṇī. Similarly, the king Śrutarvan is said to have sacrificed in the fire of the Ānavas and given gifts on the banks of Parusni.¹⁶ Turvaśu is said to have got the south-east part. Turvaśu and his descendants may have originally ruled on the banks of the river Dr̄śadvatī, which flows to the south-east of Sarasvatī. They thus must have been close neighbours of the Paurava. Later they might have migrated westward. Because in many of the R̄gvedic hymns, belonging to the period of the Tr̄tsu kings, the Turvaśas are closely associated with

12. उत त्या तुवशायदू अस्नातार शचीपतिः।

उत त्या सद्य आर्या सरयोरिन्द्र पारतः। अणाच्चित्रधावधीः। *Rv.* IV-30-17, 18

13. *Mahābhārata*, III-130

14. *Brahma Purāṇa*, 13, 148-53

15. *Rv.* VII-18-13

16. सबाधो यं जना इमेऽग्निं हव्येभिरीक्षते। जुह्वानासो यतसुचः। *Rv.* VIII-74-6

सत्यमित्वा महेनदी परूष्वव देदिशम्। नेमपो अश्वदातारः शविष्ठादस्ति मर्त्यः। *Rv.* VIII-74-15

the Yadus, and also because during that the period the region near the Drṣadvatī was occupied by the Tr̄tsus.¹⁷ Thus, the Saedyumna dynasties ruled in the land of the Sindhu and the Sarasvatī according to Purāṇic evidence, which is again in agreement with Vedic literature.

The Aikṣvāku Dynasty :

It is nothing directly said in the Purāṇas and the epics about the place where the early kings of this dynasty ruled. The greatest conqueror among the early Aikṣvāku kings was Māndhāta. He is said to have made wide conquests. Yet he is never associated with any river or region to the east of Yamunā, while in the North-west his conquests extended as far as Gāndhāra.¹⁸ Indeed the fact that he performed the sacrifice on the bank of the Yamunā shows that it was the limit of his conquests. This proves that the Aikṣvākus ruled somewhere in the country west of the Yamunā.

The *Rgveda* clearly associates the Aikṣvāku king Trasadasyu with the region to the west of Sindhu. He is said to have conferred gifts to the seer Sobhari on the bank of the river Suvāstu.¹⁹ The conquest of Gāndhāra by Māndhāta and the granting of gifts by Trasadasyu on the bank of Suvāstu, make it certain that the early Aikṣvākus ruled in a territory situated on the western side of the Sindhu.

17. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p.157

18. एषा सा यमुना राजन्महर्षिगण सेवित ।

अत्र राजा महेष्वासो मान्धाताऽयजत् स्वयम् ॥ *Mahābhārata*, III-125-25,26

तेन सोमकुलोत्पन्नो गान्धाराधिपतिर्महान् ।

गर्जन्निव महामेघः पमथ्यः निहितः शरैः । *Mahābhārata*, III-126-43

19. अदन्मे पौरुकुत्स्यः पञ्चाशतं त्रसदस्युवर्धूनाम् ॥ *Rv.* VIII-19-36

उत मे प्रयीयोर्वीयियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुर्वनि । *Rv.* VIII-19-37

The Prāṁśava Dynasty :

Nothing definite is said in the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*, about the location of this dynasty. But whatever is said about it, proves that it also ruled in the country watered by the Sindhu and its tributaries.

The Śaryāti Dynasty :

The territory headed by the kings of Śaryāti dynasty is indicated in a fairly precise manner by the *Mahābhārata*. It is well known that king Śaryāti met the Ṛṣi Cyavana in his own territory and gave his daughter in marriage to him. It is said in the *Mahābhārata* that Cyavana had his hermitage on the bank of a river called Vadhūsarā.²⁰ According to a time-honoured local tradition, the river Vadhūsarā is identical with the modern Duhān, flowing near Nārnaul in Haryana.²¹ The fact that Cyavana married the daughter of Śaryāti and his near descendant Apnavāna married the daughter of the Sudyumna king Nahuṣa,²² proves that the location of the Śaryāta kingdom in the neighbourhood of the Sudyumna kingdom.

Agreement of Rgvedic and Purāṇic Genealogy :

The important names referred to in the *Purāṇas* are often found in the *Rgveda* and other texts of Vedic literature. It shows that the historical accounts of Vedic source have been further amplified in the Purāṇic texts.

20. नाम तस्यास्तदा नद्याश्चक्ते लोकपितामहः ।
वधूसरेति भगवांश्चवनस्याश्रमं प्रति ॥ *Mahābhārata*, I-6-8

21. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p-159
22. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 65-81; *Brahma Purāṇa*, III-1-9

The *Purāṇas* trace all genealogies back to Vaivasvata Manu. Manu had ten children of whom two are particularly, important : the son Ikṣvāku and the daughter Ilā.²³ Ikṣvāku, was the eldest one, and hence his race became famous by his name. Thus, became the foremost in the *Sūryavamśa* or the solar race. However, Ikṣvāku can be considered as historical figure. Ilā still belongs to the twilight zone. According to one version,²⁴ Ilā was born as a man but become a woman because of a curse. Ilā married Budha (mercury), son of Candra (moon), and got a son Parūravas who thus is known to be of the *Candramamśa* or the lunar race.

There is a clue of uncertain chronological significance. Vedic texts as well as the *Purāṇas* tell the story of Pṛthu, son of Veṇa²⁵ He is said to have persuaded the earth to yield edible plants and fruits. Consequently, the earth was named *Pṛthvi* after him. The legend obviously commemorates the transition of the Aryans from hunting and food gathering to food growing. It is not possible to date this epoch because Pṛthu Vainya, though mentioned in the *Rgveda*,²⁶ is a semi-mythical figure. It is however clear from the Purāṇic references that this Pṛthu does not belong to any post-Manu Vaivasvata king list but is placed in an unspecified earlier period.²⁷

Some other details are available about Manu Vaivasvata, say that he was the half-brother of the twins Yama and Yami. Yama is

23. *Vayu Purāṇa*, 85; *Brahma Purāṇa*, III-60; *Mahābhārata*, I-75, etc.

24. पुरुषत्वं हृतं सर्वं स्त्रीरूपे विस्मितो नृप ।

इलेति साभवन्नारी पिनोन्नत घनस्तनी ॥ *Matsya Purāṇa*, IX-48

25. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, I-33-36; 62, 103; *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, II-36, 103 etc.

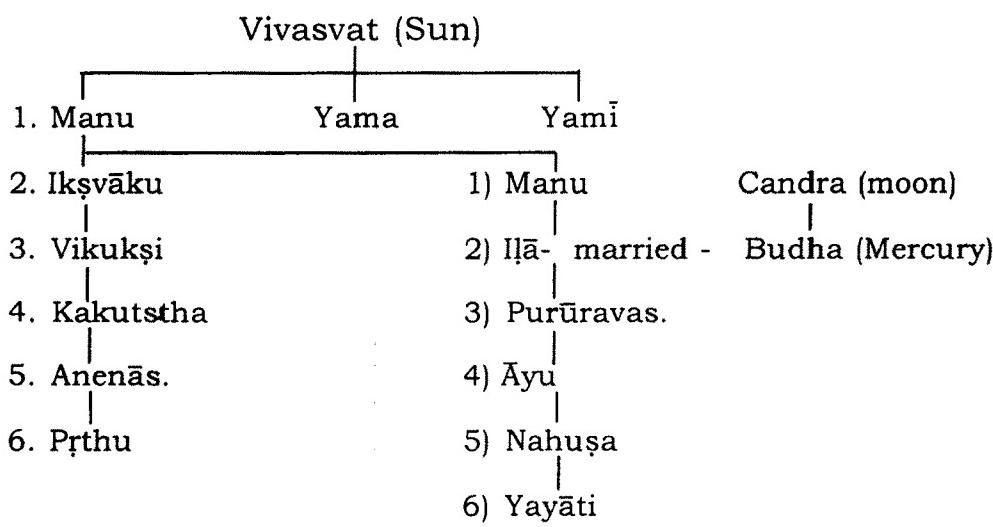
26. पृथी यद्वां वैन्यः सादनेष्वेदतो अश्विना चेतयेथाम् । *Rv.* VIII-9-10

27. Rajesh Kochhar, *Vedic People*, p-39

the king of the deceased. He has a place in the Avestā as Yima, son of Vivahavant. Therein, he is said to be a founder of civilization, who on instructions from Ahura Mazda makes his creatures prosperous. However, Manu may be a mythical character, meant to bestow divinity on the ruling dynasties. Ambiguity about Ilā's gender and the pretension of divine paternity of her son point towards the same direction.²⁸ The *Rgveda* refers to Purūravas as Aila, descendent of Ilā.²⁹

It is reasonable to suppose that the original historical tradition was purely down to earth. The integration of some historical dynasties into a single network under divine auspices came later, when these dynasties became famous. Out of the ten sons of Manu, only four, viz Sudyumna, Ikṣvāku, Prāṁśu and Śaryāti, were kings or founders of royal dynasties. Thus, it is said that the descendants of Manu's son Dhṛṣṭa occupied Bhālika (Bhalkh) and Nariṣyantra's offsprings were the Śakas.³⁰

Geneological network in the Purāṇas



28. *Ibid.*

29. इति त्वा देवा इम आहौरैळ यथेमेतद्वसी मृत्युबन्धुः। *Rv. X-95-18*

30. Rajesh Kochhar, *Vedic People, (Their History and Geography)*, Orient Longman Ltd, New Delhi, 1997 p-31.

It is here proper to know about the origin of the various branches of the lunar line because of their purāṇic importance.

The Sudyumnas :

The dynasty of Sudyumnas may first be considered. His successor Purūravas was a son of Budha³¹ Budha was a son of Soma and Ilā, daughter of Manu.

The Purāṇas have identified Soma and Budha with the Moon and Mercury respectively and there by led all subsequent writers to dub this dynasty as the 'lunar race' (*Candra-Vamśa*).

Soma and Budha are mentioned in the *Purāṇas* as the son and grandson of the Atri Ṛṣi.³² It is wrong to render those names as moon and Mercury. The Ṛṣi Budha, is well known in the Vedic literature. He is mentioned in the ancient *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*³³ and also in the *Anukramaṇī*s as the author of the Ḍgvedic hymn X-101 and part author of hymn V-1.

The *Purāṇas* unanimously regard Purūravas as the son of the Atreya Ṛṣi Budha and Ilā. The Purāṇic evidence is supported by the Vedic literature. Thus, the *Ṛgveda*³⁴ and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*³⁵ call him Aila. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*³⁶ Ilā is mentioned as a daughter of Manu. Both in the *Purāṇas* and the Vedic literature even distant descendants of Purūravas are called

31. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 85,22-23; *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, IV-1-16; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, IX-1-42, etc.

32. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 198, 1; *Vāyu Purāṇa* -90; *Brahma Purāṇa*, III-65. etc.

33. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXIV-18-6

34. इति त्वा देवा इम आहुरैळ यथेमेतद्द्वसी मृत्युबन्धुः। *Rv.* X-95-18

35. ऊर्वशी हाप्सराः पुरुरवसं ऐलं चकामे। *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, XI-5-5-1

36. *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, I-8-1 (Story is mentioned)

Ātreya. *Matsya Purāṇa*³⁷ introducing the family of Viśvāmitra, a descendant of Purūravas, calls it another branch of Atri family. Puru another descendant of Purūravas, who is the seer of two Rgvedic hymns (V-16; 17) is called Ātreya by the *Anukramanī*.³⁸

The Purūravas and his descendants are regarded in the Vedic literature as well as in the *Purāṇas* as the lineal successor of Manu's son Sudyumna. Purūravas descendants Āyu,³⁹ Nahuṣa,⁴⁰ and Yayāti⁴¹ are all mentioned in the *Rgveda*. Nahuṣa and Yayāti can be seen as joint composers of hymn IX-101 of the *Rgveda*. In the *Anukramanī*, Nahuṣa is called Mānava.⁴²

Sudyumnas fourth successor Yayāti had five sons named Yadu, Turvaśu, Druhyu, Anu, and Paru.⁴³ These five are the founders of the dynasties and clans named after them. Yadu's descendants are known as Yādavas, with the Haihayas as a branch.⁴⁴

Yādava king Śaśabindu is mentioned in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*.⁴⁵ His descendant Vītahavya is mentioned in the *Rgveda*,⁴⁶ the *Atharvaveda*⁴⁷ and *Anukramanī*.⁴⁸ The Satvants are

37. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 198-1

38. *Rv.* V-16 and 17

39. त्वमस्मै कुत्समतिथिग्वमायुं महे राज्ञे यूने अरन्धनाय | *Rv.* I-53-10
I-31-11; II-14-7, etc.

40. त्वमग्ने प्रथममायुमायवे देवा अकृणवन्नहुषस्य विशस्प्तिभ् | *Rv.* I-31-11

41. ययातेर्ये नहुषस्य बर्हिषि देवा आसते ते अधि ब्रुवन्तु नः ॥ *Rv.* X-63-1
I-31-17 ; VII-95-2, etc.

42. शावाश्विर्यातिनहुषो नहुषो मानवो मनुः संवरण इति | *Anukramanī*, IX-101

43. *Rv.* I-108-8

44. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 94 ; *Brahmanda Purāṇa*, III-69 ; 47, etc.

45. *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*, 1-4

46. त्वं धृष्णो धृष्टा वीतहव्यं प्रावोविश्वभिरुतिभिः सुदासम् | *Rv.* VII-19-3

47. *Atharvaveda*, VI-137-1, His descendants are clearly referred to as Vaitahavyas in
V-19-1

48. इमं ष्वोकोना वीतहव्यं ऋषिः | As an author of *Rv.* VI-15

mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,⁴⁹ and a famous prince of this clan Babhru is mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁵⁰ and the name of his father Devāvṛdha suggested by his patronymic Daivāvṛdha.

The most famous prince of this clan, Kṛṣṇa, is probably identical with Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, as suggested by Dr. Raychaudhari.⁵¹ Among the Vaidarbhas Bhīma is mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,⁵² and the name Vidarbha suggested by his patronymic Vaidarbha. The Caidyas are known even to the *Rgveda* which mentions a king of this dynasty named Kaśu.⁵³

The Turvaśus :

Turvaśus race is briefly described in the *Purāṇas*.⁵⁴ The seventh king Marutta, is said to have been childless and adopted Duṣyanta, the Paurava. According to the *Rgveda*, Turvaśu kings were ruling till the time of Sudās, and a Turvaśu king was included among the ten kings who fought against Sudās.⁵⁵

The Druhyus :

Druhyus race is briefly given by the *Purāṇas*.⁵⁶ A twenty-first descendent of Druhyu is the king Gāndhāra after whom the district

49. काशीनां भरतः सत्वतामिवेति । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-21

50. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

51. तदैतद्वारा आङ्गीरसः कृष्णाय देवकीपुत्रायोक्तो । *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III-17

Q. Dr. Raychaudhari, *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect*, Lecture-I, Calcutta, 1920.

52. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

53. यथाचिच्छैद्यः कशुः । *Rv.* VIII-5-37

54. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 1-6; *Brahmānda Purāṇa*, III-74,1-6; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV-16 etc.

55. *Rv.* VII-18

56. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99,11-12; *Brahmānda Purāṇa*, III-74,11-12; *Matsya Purāṇa* 48-49 etc.

and town are named. Gāndhāra's descendants are said to have spread out into the mleccha (impure) countries to the north and settled there.

The Ānavas :

The Anus descendents were known as the Ānavas; in which Kekayas are included as a branch. The name of king Uśinara of this race, is suggested in the *Rgveda* by a mention of his wife Uśinarāṇī.⁵⁷ Śivi is mentioned in the *Anukramanīs*⁵⁸ and *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*.⁵⁹ The name of his father Uśinara is suggested by his patronymic Auśinara. Among branches of Ānavas, the Kekayas are mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,⁶⁰ and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.⁶¹ The Madras are mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, and an Ambaṣṭha king is mentioned in the same text.⁶² Madras and Ambaṣṭhas are branches of the Anus.

The Pauravas :

From the R̄gvedic as well as Purāṇic point of view, the most important dynasty is Puru's. Among Paurava kings Bharata is mentioned in the *Rgveda*.⁶³ The name of his father Duṣyanta is suggested by his patronymic Dauḥsyanti occurring in the *Śatapatha* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas*.⁶⁴ Bharata had no heir because it is said

57. समिन्द्रेरय गामनद्वाहं य आवदुशीनरण्या अनः। *Rv. X-59-10*

58. उत्तिष्ठतैकर्चा शिखिरौशीनरः। As an author of *Rv. X-179-1*

59. *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XXI-18

60. अश्वपतिर्वाऽअयं कैकेयः। *Śataptha Brāhmaṇa*, X-6-1-2

61. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, V-11-4

62. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 39-7

63. तमीळे अथ द्विता भरतो वाजिभिः शुनम्। *Rv. VI-16-4*

64. तेन हैतेन भरतो दौष्टन्तिरीजे। *Śataptha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4, 11-12

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, 39-9

that his wives killed their sons, as he was disappointed in them. He, therefore, adopted a Ṛṣi, called Vitatha, son of Br̥haspati. He is called the family of Bhāradvāja.

An account of this adoption is supported by this *Vedārtha-Dīpikā* which assigns five sons (i.e descendants) named Suhotra, Śunahotra, Nara, Garga and Rjiśvan to Bhāradvāja.⁶⁵ It says that they could claim optionally to be descendants of Br̥haspati or of Bharata. Vitatha is corrupted form of Vidathin, for Rjiśvan. It is clearly shown in the *Rgveda* as Vaidathina.⁶⁶ The *Bṛhaddevatā* also mentions Vidathin as the name of Bhāradvāja.⁶⁷ He is also probably called Vidatha in another hymn of the *Rgveda*.⁶⁸

The fourth descendant of Vitatha is called Br̥hat. Br̥hat was succeeded by his son Ajamīḍha, who is mentioned in the *Rgveda*.⁶⁹ After Ajamīḍha this race divided into two important branches. Which continued in the name of his sons Ṛkṣa and Suhotra referred to in the *Rgveda*.⁷⁰ Suhotra is mentioned in the *Anukramaṇī*⁷¹ as also his grandson of Ajamīḍha who is called Sauhotra.⁷² Parikṣit and Pratīpa are mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.⁷³ Śantanu is

65. *Vedārtha Dīpikā* on *Rv.* VI-52

66. त्वं पिंग्रं मृगयं शूशुवांसमृजिष्वने वैदथिनाय रन्धीः। *Rv.* IV-16-13

67. योऽङ्ग्रेभ्य ऋषिर्ज्ञे तस्य पुत्रो बृहस्पतिः।

बृहस्पतेर्भारद्वाजो विदथीति य उच्यते ॥ *Bṛhaddevatā*, V-102

68. उत त्ये मा मारुताश्वस्य शोणाः क्रत्वामधासो विदथस्य रातौ ॥ *Rv.* V-33-9

69. नरो यद्वामश्विना स्तोममावन्त्सधस्तुतिमाजमीळ्हासो अग्मन् । *Rv.* IV-44-6

70. ऋज्राविन्द्रोत आ ददे हरी ऋक्षस्य सूनवि । *Rv.* VIII-68-15

71. अभुरेकः सुहोत्रस्तु चतुर्थी शक्वरी । अपूर्वा । *Anukramaṇī* as author of *Rv.* VI-31 and 32

72. क उ श्रवत्सपुरुमीळ्हाजमीळ्हौ सौहोत्रौ त्वाश्विनं हि तं वाम् । *Anukramaṇī* as author of *Rv.* IV-43 and 44

73. *Atharvaveda*, VIII-68-15; XX-127, 7-10

mentioned in the *Rgveda*.⁷⁴ The last king of the Paurava race before the Bhārata war was Dhṛtarāṣṭra, son of Vicitravīrya. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is mentioned in the *Kāthaka Samhitā*,⁷⁵ and the name of his father Vicitravīrya is suggested by his patronymic Vaicitravīrya.

The Jāhnava:

One of the important branches of the Paurava-Bharatas was the Jāhnava dynasty of Kanyākubja. Many of the Kanyākubja kings are referred to in the Vedic literature.

The name Jahnu occurs in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*.⁷⁶ Kuśika is mentioned in the *Rgveda*,⁷⁷ *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁷⁸ and in the *Anukramanīś*⁷⁹ Gāthin is also mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁸⁰ and in the *Anukramanīś*.⁸¹ Viśvāmitra is ofcourse a well-known R̥gvedic figure. The whole of the third *Maṇḍala* of the *Rgveda* is attributed to him and his sons and grandsons. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁸² he is called *rājaputra* and in the *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa* he is called a Jāhnava and a king.⁸³

74. आदित्यैर्वा यद्दुसुभिर्मरुत्वान्त्स पर्जन्यं शंतनवे वृषाय *Rv.* X-98-1

75. *Kāthaka Samhitā*, X-6

76. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-6

Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa, XXI-12

77. गीर्भि रण्वं कुशिकासो हवामहे । *Rv.* III-26-1

78. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-6

79. शासकुशिको विश्वामित्र एव वा श्रुतेः । *Anukramanīś* as author of *Rv.* III-31

80. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-6

81. अन्ने होतारं गाथी ह । *Anukramanīś* as author of *Rv.* III-19 to 22

82. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-5

83. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXI-12

The Kāsyas :

Another important branch of the Bharatas was the dynasty of Kāsi. Divodāsa is mentioned in the *Kāthaka Samhitā*.⁸⁴ His father Bhīma is suggested by his patronymic Bhaimaseni. His son Pratardana is mentioned in the same *Samhitā*,⁸⁵ as well as the *Anukramanīś* which call him Kāśīrājā at one place and Daivodāsi, son of Divodāsa at another place.⁸⁶

The Trtsus :

After the king Ajamīḍha, the Bharatas divided into two great branches. In the main race the king who succeeded Ajamīḍha was Rkṣa. According to *Purāṇas*, the another branch established a new kingdom by Ajamīḍhas son Nīla.⁸⁷ The name is not given to this dynasty in the *Purāṇas*. However, in the *Rgveda* this dynasty is called as Trtsu dynasty.⁸⁸

Trtsu mentioned in the Rgvedic hymns.⁸⁹ He is variously called Rkṣa and Pṛthu in the *Purāṇas*. The next king of this race, Bhṛmyaśva is suggested by the patronymic of Mudgalā who is called Bhārmyaśva in the *Anukramanīś*.⁹⁰ Mudgala and his wife Indrasenā are well known in the Rgvedic hymns.⁹¹ Mudgala's son

84. *Kāthaka Samhitā*, VII-1-8

85. *Kāthaka Samhitā*, XXI-10

86. काशीरजो प्रतर्दनो रोषदश्वो वसुमना आध्यानुष्टुप् । *Anukramanīś* as author of *Rv.* X-179- 2

प्र सेनानि चतुर्विंशति दैवदासीः प्रतर्दनः । IX-96

87. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99, 194-210 ; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 50, 1-16; *Hariyamīśa Purāṇa* 32, 63-80, etc.

88. *Rv.* VII-18;33;83

89. व्यानवस्य तुत्सवे गयं भाष्मेषं पूरुं विदथे मृश्वाचम् । *Rv.* VII-18-13

90. प्र ते मुद्लो भार्यश्वो दुगणेन ऋषभेण । *Anukramanīś* as author of *Rv.* X-102

91. ते न सूर्भर्वं शतवत्सहस्रं गवां मुद्ललः प्रधने जिगाय । *Rv.* X-102-5

Vadhryaśva⁹² and grandson Divodāsa⁹³ are mentioned in the *R̄gveda Samhitā*. The name of Pijavana is suggested in the patronymic of Sudās.⁹⁴ Sudās is as famous R̄gvedic king. Sudās' grandson Somaka is also mentioned in the *R̄gveda*,⁹⁵ and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.⁹⁶ His fathers name Sahadeva is suggested by calling him Somaka *Sāhadevya*.

The Pāñcāla Dynasties :

The word Pāñcāla, implies that they were an aggregate of five families. According to Purāṇas, the Tr̄tsu king Bhṛmyaśva had five sons, they are : Mudgala, Sṛnjaya, Bṛhadiṣu, Yavīnara, and Kṛmilāśva.⁹⁷ They were called the Pāñcālas. But this is wrong interpretation of the later editors.⁹⁸ The fact that the *Mahābhārata* indicates that one of the Pāñcāla families was named Somaka.⁹⁹ It shows that the Pāñcālas could not have come into existence till the time of Somaka, who was descendant of Mudgala. This, therefore, means that the descendant of these five princes, sometime after the time of Somaka, formed themselves into a group called Pāñcālas.

The epic indicates another family constituting the Pāñcālas, that is Sṛnjaya family. The Sṛnjaya was Bhṛmyaśya's second son. Many of his descendants such as Prastoka¹⁰⁰ and Sahadeva¹⁰¹

92. भद्रा अग्नेर्वध्यश्वस्य संदुशो वामी प्रणीतिः सुरणा उपेतयः। *Rv.* X-69-1

93. याभिर्महामतिथिगवं कशोजुवं दिवोदासं शम्बरहत्य आवतम्। *Rv.* I-112-14

94. सुदासं दत्वा वसु बिभ्रता रथे पृक्षो वहतमश्विना। *Rv.* I-47-6

95. बोधध्यन्मा हरिभ्यां कुमारः साहदेव्यः। *Rv.* IV-15-7

96. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

97. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99-194-211; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 50, 1-16 etc

98. P.L. Bhargava, *India In the Vedic Age*, pp-136-137

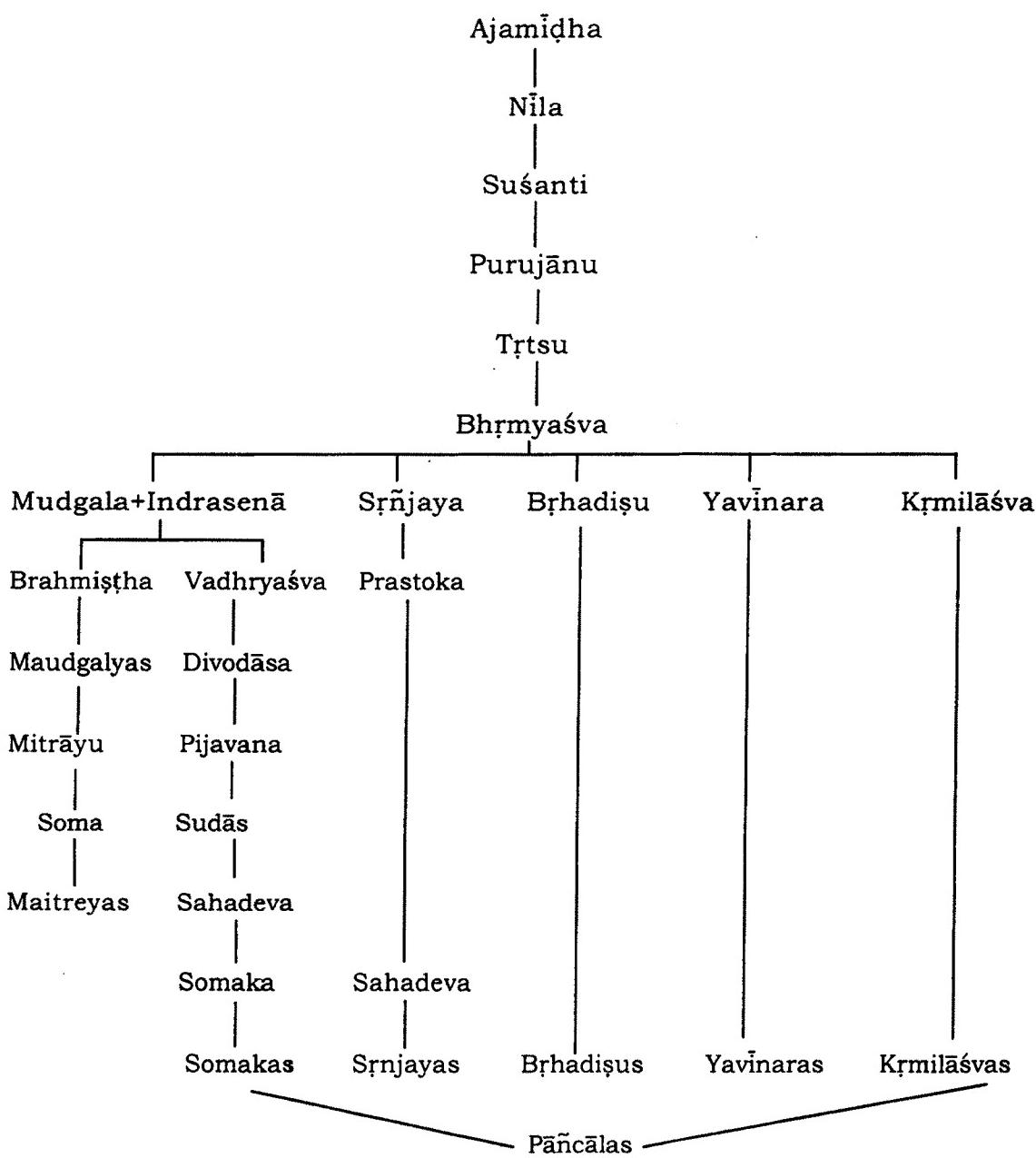
99. *Mahābhārata*, I-185,31; 193-1 *Dr̄ṣṭadyumna*, the Pāñcāla Prince is called the best of Somakas, So drupada is called Saumaki-*Mahābhārata*, I-131

100. प्रस्तोक इन्द्रु राधसस्त इन्द्र दश कोशयीर्दश वाजिनोऽदात्। *Rv.* VI-47-22

101. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

are mentioned in the Vedic literature. Thus, the origin of Pāñcālas, as given in the Purāṇas, finds Vedic corroboration. These Pāñcāls settled in the country, called Krivi.¹⁰² This is subsequently assumed the name, Pāñcāla.

The Tṛtsus and Pāñcālas:



102. त्रिव्याऽ इति ह कै पुरा पाञ्चालानाचक्षते । *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-7

The Aikṣvākus :

The dynasty founded by Manu's son Ikṣvāku was called Aikṣvāku dynasty. This dynasty is also called in later texts, the solar dynasty. Manu is well known in the *Rgveda Samīhita*,¹⁰³ as son of Vivasvat. Ikṣvāku is also found in the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*.¹⁰⁴

The twenty-first king of this race is Māndhāṭṛ, who is mentioned in the *Rgveda*,¹⁰⁵ the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*,¹⁰⁶ and in the *Anukramanīś*.¹⁰⁷ His father's name Yavanāśva is suggested by his patronymic Yauvanāśva. Māndhāṭā's son and grand son are said to have been Purukutsa¹⁰⁸ and Trasadasyu¹⁰⁹ respectively. These two kings are undoubtedly identical with the same names in the *Rgveda*. According to Macdonell and Keith,¹¹⁰ Rapson¹¹¹ and other scholars, the R̄gvedic kings of these names belonged to the Pūru family. Consequently, F.E. Pargiter attempted to prove that the R̄gvedic kings, Purukutsa and Trasadasyu, were different from the Aikṣvāku Purukutsa and Trasadasu of the *Purāṇas*. Against of this view, P.L.Bhargava,¹¹² proved that the Purāṇic Purukutsa and Trasadayu are identical with the king of the same names in the Vedic literature.

103. यथा मनौ विवस्वति सोमं शक्रापिबः सुतम् । *Rv.* VIII-52-1

104. यस्येक्ष्वाकुरूप व्रते रेवान्मराथ्येधते । *Rv.* X-60-4

105. याभिः सूर्यं परियाथः परावति मात्यातारं क्षेत्रपत्येष्वावतम् । *Rv.* I-112-13

106. *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-2-10

107. प्रो षु सुदाः पैजवनः शक्वर । *Anukramanīś*, as author of *Rv.* X-134

108. त्वं ह त्यदिन्द्र सप्त युद्धयुरो वज्रिमुरुकुत्साय दर्दः । *Rv.* I-63-7

109. उत त्वे मा पौरुकुत्सस्य सूरेस्त्रसदस्योहिरणिनो रराण । *Rv.* V-33-8

110. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, pp-541-542

111. Ed. Rapson, *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, London, 1922, p-305

112. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, pp-143-144

Trasadasyu's successor was Sambhūta. His son Viṣṇuvṛdha. One branch descended from him became a Brāhmaṇa family and the other branch descended from his son Anāraṇya continued as the Aikṣvāku race.¹¹³

Anāraṇya is mentioned in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*.¹¹⁴ Vasumanas in the *Anukramanīś*.¹¹⁵ So also, Trayaruṇa in the *R̥gveda*,¹¹⁶ Hariścandra in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,¹¹⁷ Bhagīratha in the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*.¹¹⁸

The Prāṁśavas :

This dynasty was founded by Manu's son Prāṁśu. In this race Marutta is mentioned in the *Śatapatha* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas*.¹¹⁹ The name of his father Avikṣita is suggested by his patronymic Avikṣita.

Śaryāti :

The most famous of the sons of Manu is Śaryāti. He is mentioned in the *R̥gveda Samīhita*,¹²⁰ and *Anukramanīś*.

Thus, the genealogical account preserved in the *Purāṇas*, agrees with the evidence supplied by the Vedic literature. But a question remains that how dependable is the genealogical

113. *Kūrma Purāṇa*, I,20, 25-28; *Līlīga Purāṇa*, I-65.39-43

114. *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*, 1-4

115. वसुमना आद्यानुष्टुप् । *Anukramanīś*, as author of *R̥v.* X-179-3

116. यो मे गिरस्तुविजातस्य पूर्विर्युक्तेनाभि ऋचरुणो गृणाति । *R̥v.* V-27-3

117. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-1

118. *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-1,2

119. महाक्रतमतिरात्रस्तेन ह मरुतऽआविक्षितऽईजऽआथोगवो राजा ।
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XIII-5-4-6

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, 33-1

120. तद्विच्छर्यणावती । *R̥v.* I-84-14; VIII-6-39; 7-29; 64-11; X-65-22 etc.

information provided by the *Purāṇas*? There is no way of checking the veracity of various kings listed in their entirety. But verily, fragmentary historical references are preserved in the *Rgveda*. At no place does the Purāṇic tradition run counter to the Rgvedic allusions. In fact, the *Purāṇas* help to place the Rgvedic references in their proper contexts, because very often in the *Rgveda* and other Vedic texts patronymics are used in place of names for reason. The *Rgveda* remembers Yayāti as an ancient sacrificer and refers to him as Nāhuṣya (son of Nahuṣa). The *Purāṇas* confirm that he is indeed an early king and son of Nahuṣa. Many kings, known from the *Purāṇas* to be early kings, figured in the *Rgveda*. Like, Ikṣvāku, Purūravas, Māndhātā etc.

Besides, some names of kings found in the *Purāṇas*, are not figured in *Rgveda*. viz. Hariścandra, Bhagiratha etc. Yet, Hariścandra appears in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*, Bhagiratha in the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*. The *Purāṇas* thus, constitute a historical data bank consistent with the Vedic texts.

The *Purāṇas* do not seem to have been overwhelmed by citations in the *Rgveda*. Many celebrated kings in the *Rgveda* are not known to the *Purāṇas* - eg. Abhyavartin Cāyamāna, Śrutarvān Arkṣa and Svanaya Bhāvya. These were probably minor chieftains who had the good fortune of having acquired the services of the seers. Remarkably, no contemporaneous hymn exists in honour of the most celebrated kings.

More important than the names of the individual kings are the names of various clans that figure in the *Rgveda*. The Vedic texts by themselves cannot establish the inter-relationship between

them. For example, Vedic Index¹⁰² can only suggest as probable that the Bharatas, in the times of the *Brāhmaṇas*, were merging with the Kuru-Pāñcāla people or tentatively mention the possibility of the Union of Bharatas and Purus with the Kurus. A student of the *Purāṇas* would consider these conclusions as self-evident. The Purus, Bharatas, Kurus and the so-called Pāñcālas are all related clans, which are known by different names at the different times to distinguish themselves from one another.

Reading these historical accounts found in the Vedic texts, it seems that above mentioned historical accounts has been customary for the writers of Indian history to confine themselves, so far as the political history of the period is concerned, to the few isolated facts gleaned from the Vedic texts. Pargiter has observed - "Ancient Indian history has been fashioned out of compositions, which are purely religious and priestly, which notoriously do not deal with history, and which totally lack the historical sense. The extra-ordinary nature of such history may be perceived, if it were suggested that European history should be constructed merely out of theological literature. What would raise a smile if applied to Europe has been soberly accepted when applied to India."¹²² In response to this a convincing reply may be given in the words of R.C. Majumdar - "The force of these remarks is undeniable and no student of Indian history should ignore the legendary element in the Puranas and epics. It is necessary to remember that, for reasons stated above, we cannot accept those traditions as genuine historical facts so long or so far as they are not corroborated by contemporary texts or other reasonable evidence. Until then we can treat them only a traditional history. But such traditional history has its value, and is in any case a necessary preliminary step for the discovery of genuine history."¹²³

121. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-96.

122. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*. Intro,

123. R.C. Majumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-311

IMPORTANT DYNASTIES OF THE R̄GVEDIC PERIOD
THE ERA OF SAPTASINDHU

Note: The Pauravas were famed as Bhāratas after the time of king Bharata.

Prāniśavas	Aikṣvākus	Yādavas	Haihayas	Druhyas	Ānavas	Pauravas	Turvaśas
1 Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	1 Manu*
2 Prāṁśu	Iksvāku*	Sud�umna	Sud�umna	Sud�umna	Sud�umna	Sud�umna	2 Sud�umna
3	Vikukṣi	Pūrūravas*	Pūrūravas*	Pūrūravas*	Pūrūravas*	Pūrūravas*	3 Purūravas*
4 Prajāpati	Kakutstha	Āyu	Āyu	Āyu	Āyu	Āyu	4 Āyu
5	Anenas	Nahuṣa*	Nahuṣa*	Nahuṣa*	Nahuṣa*	Nahuṣa*	5 Nahuṣa*
6 Khanītra	Pr̄thu	Yayāti*	Yayāti*	Yayāti*	Yayāti*	Yayāti*	6 Yayāti*
7	Viṣṭarāśva	Yadu	Yadu	Yadu	Yadu	Yadu	7 Turvaśa
8 Kṣupa	Ārdra	Kroṣṭu	Kroṣṭu	Sahasrīj	Sahasrīj	Sahasrīj	8
9	Yuvanāśva I	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
10 Vimśa	Śrāvasta	Vṛṇivant	Vṛṇivant	.....	.....	.....	9
11	Bṛhadāśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
12 Vivimśa	Kuvalāśva*	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
13	Dr̄ghāśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
14 Khanīnetra	Pramoda	Svāhi	Svāhi	.....	.....	.....	.....
15	Haryāśva I	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
16 Ativibhūti	Nikumbha	Ruśadgu	Ruśadgu	.....	.....	.....	.....
17 Karandhamā	Sāṁhatāśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
18 Avikṣit	Akṛśāśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
19 Marutta*	Prasenajit	Citraratha	Citraratha	.....	.....	.....	.....
20 Narisyanta	Yuvanāśva II	Sāśabindu*	Sāśabindu*	.....	.....	.....	18 Rceyū
21 Dama	Māndhātī*	Prthuśravas	Prthuśravas	.....	.....	.....	19 Matināra
22 Rāṣṭra-	Durgaha	Antera	Antera	Dharma	Dharma	Dharma	20 Tānsu
vardhana	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	21 Dharmamitra
23 Sudhṛti	Girikṣit	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	22 Duṣyanta*
24 Nara	Puruķutsa*	Suyajīna	Suyajīna	.....	.....	.....	23 Bharata*
25 Kevala	Trasadasayu*	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	24 Vidaṭha*
26 Bandhumant	.....	Uśanas	Uśanas	.....	.....	.....	25 Bhuvamanyu
27 Vegavant	Sambhūta	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	26 Br̄hatkṣatra
				Dharma	Dharma	Dharma	27 Suhotra*

IMPORTANT DYNASTIES OF THE RGVEDIC PERIOD THE ERA OF CONQUEST

Note: The first kings of all the three Bhārata dynasties were sons of Suhotra, the last Paurava king of the previous era.

Aikṣvākus	Yādavas	Haihayas	Druhyus	Anavas	Trtsus (Bhāratas)	Jahnus (Bhāratas)	Kāśis (Bhāratas)
28 Viṣṇuvṛddha	Sineyu	Sāhañja	.....	.....	Bṛhat Ajamīḍha	Jahnu*	Kāśa
29 Anaranya	.....	.....	.....	.....	Nila	Sunaha	Dirghatapas
30 Trasadaśva	Marutta	.....	.....	.....	.....	Ajaka	Dhanvantari
31 Haryāva II	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	30
32 Hasta	Kambalabarhis	Mahiṣmant	Dhṛta	.....	Suśānti	Balākāśva	Ketumant I
33 Rohidaśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	Purujānu	Kuśa	Bhimasena
34 Vasumanas*	Rukmavaca	Bhadraśrenyَا*	.....	.....	Trtsu	Kuśāmba	Divodāsa
35 Triūṣan	Parāvṛt	Durdama	.....	.....	.....	Isiratha	Pratardana*
36 Tryaruna*	Kanaka	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	34
37 Triśāṅku	Kṛtavirya	.....	.....	.....	.....	Kuśika*	Vatsa
38 Hariscandra*	Arjuna*	.....	.....	.....	.....	Gāthīn*	Alarka*
39 Rohita	Jyāmaṅga	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	35
40 Harita	Vidarbha*	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	36
41 Cañcu	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	37
42 Vijaya	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	38
43 Ruruka	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	39
44 Vrka	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	40
45 Bāhu	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	41
46 Sagara*	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	42
47 (Asamañjas)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	43
48 Amśumant	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	44
49 Dilipa	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	45
				.....	.....	.....	46
				.....	.....	.....	47
				.....	.....	.....	48
				.....	.....	.....	49

4. Royal Kings

Divodāsa :

Divodāsa is one of the earliest heroes of the *Rgvedic* age. The *Rgveda* states that he was a son of Vadhryaśva.¹ He was probably grand-father of king Sudās, the famous hero of the *Rgvedic* period, who fought against the *Dāśarājña* kings. The king Sudās is clearly associated with the Trtsus and the Bharatas, and probably Pijavana was the son of Divodāsa. The name of Pijavana is suggested in the patronymic of Sudās.² The name of Pijavana is mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*³ and *Anukramanīś*⁴ also. Thus, Divodāsa was naturally earliest king of Bharatas.

Divodāsa's great enemy was Śambara, the Dasyu chief, holding the hundred forts.⁵ The *Rgveda* mentions he repeatedly defeated his great enemy, Śambara, the chief of the Dasyus.⁶

The two mantras of the *Rgveda* suggest that Turvaśa and Yadu attacked Divodāsa.⁷ The Turvaśa were the allies of the Vṛcivants, who were said to have been defeated on the bank of Hriyūpiyā.⁸ Which is identified with Harappa by a historian viz., Wheeler.⁹

1. इयमदाद्रभसमृणच्युतं दिवोदासं ब्रध्यश्वाय दाशुषे।
या शश्वन्तमाचखादवसं पर्णि ता ते दात्राणि तविषा सरस्वती। *Rv.* VI-61-1
2. *Rv.* VII-18-22,25
3. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, (35-8; 39-8) VII-21
4. *Anukramanīś*, *Rv.* X-133
5. तं शतन्यव शंबरस्य पुरो जगन्थाप्रतीति दस्योः। *Rv.* VI-31-4
6. *Rv.* I-112-14; 16-18 ; 119-4; 130-7 to 10; II-19-6; IV-26-3; 30-20; VI-26-3; 43-1; 47-21,22; IX-61-2. etc
7. य आनयत्परावतः सुनीति तुर्वशं यदुम्। *Rv.* VI-45-1
पुरः सद्य इत्थाधिये दिवोदासाय शम्बरम्। अथत्यं तुर्वशं यदुम्॥ *Rv.* IX-61-2
8. वृचीवतो यद्विरियूपीययां हन् पूर्वे अर्थे भियसापरो दर्त्। *Rv.* VI-27-5
9. Wheeler, *The Dawn of Civilisation*, p-249

On the side of Divodāsa, there were chiefs like Rjaśvan, Āyu, and Kutsa, and on that of his opponents Cumuri, Dhuni, Śambara, Samadibha, Pipru, Śuṣṇa, Vetasu, Daṣoṇi and Tugra. Rjaśvan is said to have stormed the hundred towns of Vangṛd¹⁰ and destroyed the fifty thousand followers of Pipru and Mrgaya.¹¹ Āyu is known to have vanquished Veśa.¹² Kutsa is stated to have shattered the forts of Ilibiśa¹³ and killed Śuṣṇa, "the foe of harvest."¹⁴ Divodāsa is credited with the conquest of the hundred stone cedels of Śambara¹⁵ and killed him with thousand of his followers after an endeavours of forty years.¹⁶

In the *Rgveda*, Divodāsa is said to have fought with the Pārāvatas and Br̄ṣayas on the bank of Sarasvatī.¹⁷ The Pārāvatas are mentioned in the *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*¹⁸ as in the eastern part, about the river Yamunā. Hillebrandt identifies them with the Parautai of potlemy and the Barsacutus of Arrian and locates them on the Haraqaiti or Arghandab in Arachosia.¹⁹ Thus, it may well be that Divodāsa rose in the northern region, won some success there, which aroused other peoples in the east, resulting in his encounter with them.

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10. त्वं करञ्जमुत पर्णयं वधीस्तेजिष्ठ्यातिथिगवस्य वर्तनी ।
त्वं शता वङ्गदस्याभित्युरोऽनुदः परिषूता ऋजश्विना ॥ *Rv.* I-53-8
 11. त्वं पिपुं मृगयं शूशुवांसमृजिश्वने वैदथिनाय रन्धीः ।
पञ्चशत्कष्णा नि वपः सहस्रात्कं न पुरो जरिमा वि दर्दः ॥ *Rv.* IV-16-13
 12. अहं वेषं नप्रमायवेऽकरमहं सव्याय पङ्गभीमरन्धयम् । *Rv.* X-49-5
 13. न्याविद्यदिलिबिशस्य दुङ्घा वि शुद्धिणमभिनच्छुण्मिन्दः । *Rv.* I-33-12
 14. कुत्साय शुष्णमशुष्णं नि बहीः प्रपित्वे अहः कुवयं सहस्रा । *Rv.* IV-16-12
 15. शतमश्मन्मयीनां पुरमिन्दो यास्यत् । दिवोदासाय दाषुषे । *Rv.* IV-30-20
 16. त्वं तदुक्तमिन्द्र वर्हणा कः प्र यच्छता सहस्रा शूर दर्षीः ।
अव गिरेदासं शम्बरं हन्त्रावो दिवोदासं चित्रभिरुति ॥ *Rv.* VI-26-5
 17. *Rv.* VI-61-1
 18. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, IX-4,11
 19. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-363

Divodāsa appears to be an energetic supporter of the fire ritual.²⁰ So, Agni is once called by his name in the *Rgveda*.²¹ Modern scholars Hillebrandt²² and Bhandarkar²³ have shown that Divodāsa, meaning 'the heavenly Dāsa,' was himself a Dāsa chief. But, Macdonell and Keith, refused this view and they opine that Atithigva and Divodāsa were identical.

Macdonell and Keith's objections are as below: "From one passage (*Rv.* VI-61-1), where Divodāsa is said to have fought against the Paṇis, the Pārāvatas and Br̥ṣaya, Hillebrandt has inferred that he was engaged in conflicts with tribes of Arachoria and interpreting the names as the 'heavenly Dāsa' conjectures that he was himself a Dāsa. This conclusion is not probable, for the Sarasvatī on which the battle in question took place and which can hardly be the Haraqaiti of Arachosia, would naturally designate the later Sarasvatī, while the Pārāvatas are mentioned in the *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa* (IX-4-11) as in the east, about the Yamunā. Bergaine's opinion that Divodāsa and Atithigva were different people cannot be supported in view of the complete parallelism in the acts of the two persons."²⁴

Sudās :

Sudās was a famous king in the R̥gvedic country. In the *Rgveda*, he is called Paijavana; it means that he was the son of Pijavana.²⁵

20. क्राणा यदस्य पितरा मंहनेष्टः पर्षत्पव्ये अहन्ना सप्त होतृन्। *Rv.* X-61-1

21. प्र दैवोदासो अग्निर्देवाँ अच्छा न मज्जना। *Rv.* VIII-103-2

22. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-363

23. Dr. Bhandarkar, *Some aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*

24. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-363-364

25. *Rv.* VII-18-22, 23,25; I-47-6 etc.

A R̄gvedic *mantra* speaks that Divodāsa as the father of Sudās.²⁶ Combining these two, Sāyaṇa states that Pijavana was another name of Divodāsa.²⁷ In the *R̄gveda*, various place the name of the Pijavana is suggested in the patronymic of Sudās. If Pijavana was father of Sudās, then Divodāsa must be grand-father of Sudās.

Sudās was the hero of the *Dāsarājñā* war. He was the king of the Tr̄tsu and Bharatas. At first, the seer Viśvāmitra was his priest, who accompanied him in his raids over the Vipāśā and Śutudrī, as described in the third *maṇḍala* of the *R̄gveda*.²⁸ But for some reason or other, probably on account of the superior priestly knowledge of Vasiṣṭha, king Sudās appointed Vasiṣṭha in place of Viśvāmitra as his priest. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*²⁹ calls him a great king and his priest is said to be Vasiṣṭha. The same thing is attested by *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,³⁰ where his generosity to his priest is recorded. He had a queen named Sudevi, whom he is said to have received through the favour of Aśvins.³¹ He appears with Trasadasyu in a (VII.19) hymn without hint of rivalry,³² but elsewhere he seems to be referred to as defeated by Purukutsa, Trasadasyu's father.³³

26. दिवोदासं न पितरं सुदासः। *Rv.* VII-18-25

27. दिवोदास इति पिजवनस्यैव नामान्तरम्। Sāyaṇa on *Rv.* VII-18-25

28. See details in *Dāsarājñā war*

29. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII-34,9

30. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XVI-11-14

31. याभिः सुदास ऊह्युः सुदेव्यं ताभिरुषु ऊतिभिरश्विना गतम्। *Rv.* I-112-19

32. त्वं धृष्णो धृष्टा वीतहव्यं प्रावो विश्वाभिरूतिभिः सुदासम्।

ग्र पौरकुत्सिं त्रसदस्युमावः क्षेत्रसाता वृत्रहत्येषु पूरुम्॥ *Rv.* VII-19-3

33. त्वं ह त्यदिन्द्र सप्ता युद्यन्पुरो वज्ञिन्पुरुकुत्साय दर्दः।

बर्हिन्न यत्सुदासे वृथा वर्गहो राजन्वरिः पूरवे कः। *Rv.* I-63-7



The king Sudās, won the victory in the battle-field of *Dāśarājñā* war. The most important event of 'Dāśarājñā' war is recorded in the *Rgveda manḍala* III-53 and VII-18, 33, and 83. These hymns describes that the king Sudās Paijavana leader of the Bharatas and Trtsus were fought against the allied forces of the 'Dāśarājñā' kings. Aryan and non-Aryan tribes allied to the latter took part in the war. It is to be noted here that Pūru, Yadu, Turvaśa, Anu, Druhyu, Alina, Paktha, Bhalānas, Śiva, Viśānin, Śimyu, Vaikarṇa etc from the group of *Dāśarājñā* kings.

In the *Rgveda*, it is notable kings Sudās' won the war, one two battle-fields, one fought on the bank of Paruṣṇī and the other on the bank of Yamunā.

Purukutsa :

Purukutsa is a one of the leading kings in the *Rgveda*. He was mentioned several times in the *Rgveda*. He appears as a conqueror of the Dāsas. One *mantra* of the *Rgveda* mentions that Indra is stated to have assisted Purukutsa in his wars with the Dāsas. It is as below:

"Favoured by your protection, Indra, we solicit new wealth; by this adoration men glorify you at sacrifices, for that you have shattered with your bolt the seven cities of Śarat, killing the opponents, (of sacred rites), and giving their spoils to Purukutsa."³⁴

In a hymn of the *Rgveda*, Indra is said to be fighting for Purukutsa and bringing gain to him.

34. सनेम तेऽवसा नव्य इन्द्रः प्र पूरवः स्तवत्त एना यज्ञैः।
सप्त यत्पुरः शर्म शारदीर्दर्ढन्दासीः पुरुकुत्साय शिक्षन् । | *Rv. VI-20-10*

"Indra, wielder of the thunderbolt, fighting on behalf of Purukutsa, you overturned the seven cities; O king, you did cut off for Sudās the wealth of Amhas, as if it had been a tuft of sacred grass and gave it to him, who pleased you with oblations."³⁵

In another hymn of the *Rgveda*, it is said that the Aśvins to have guarded Purukutsa.

"With those aids by which you enriched 'Śucanti' and gave him a handsome habitation, and rendered the scorching heat pleasurable to Atri, and by which you preserved Prṣṇigu and Purukutsa ; with them, Aśvins come willingly hither."³⁶

These references make it clear that Purukutsa was as much a favourite of the gods and that in the beginning, he scored some significant successes in the encounters with his enemies and thus ranked as a great king of his time.

The king Purukutsa's son was Trasadasyu. In the *Rgveda*, he is accordingly called Paurakutsya³⁷ or Paurakutsi,³⁸ One of the hymns of the *Rgveda*, mentions the birth of Purukutsa's son. These mantras are as follows :

"The seven R̥sis were the protectors of this our (kingdom) when the son of Durgahā was in bond ; performing worship, they obtained for his queen from the favour of Indra and Varuṇa, a son like Indra the slayer of foes dwelling near the gods.

35. *Rv.* VII-19-3

36. याभिः शुचन्ति धनसां सुषंसदं तसं घर्ममोम्यावन्तमत्रये ।

याभिः प्रश्निगुं पुरुकुत्समावतं ताभिरुषु उतिभिरश्विना गतम् । *Rv.* I-112-7

37. उत त्ये मा पौरुकुत्सास्य सूरेष्वसदस्योहिरणिनो रराणाः ।

वहन्तु मा दश श्येतासो अस्य गौरीक्षितस्य कृतुभिर्नु सच्चे । *Rv.* V-33-8

38. *Rv.* VII-19-3

The wife of Purukutsa propitiated you two, Indra and Varuṇa, with oblations and prostrations, and therefore you gave her the king Trasadasyu, the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods.”³⁹

Different conclusions have been drawn by modern scholars, on these *mantras*. According to Sāyaṇa, Purukutsa was captured in the battle, whereupon his wife Purukutsāni secured a son to restore the fortunes of the Purus.⁴⁰ According to Sayāṇa, the word ‘*Daurgahe*’, is patronymic of Purukutsa, which means ‘descendant of Durgaha’.⁴¹ Sieg, offers different interpretation. According to him the word ‘*Daurgage*’, which occurs in the hymn, and which in the ordinary view is rendered ‘descendant of Durgaha,’ an ancestor of Purukutsa, is the name of the horse, the hymn recording the success of an *Aśvamedha* (horse sacrifice) undertaken by Purukutsa for his wife, as by kings in late times, to secure a son.⁴² This interpretation is supported by the version of *Daurgahe*, as given in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.⁴³

Purukutsa and Trasadasyu were great kings both according to the Vedic and the Purāṇic and epic evidence. In the *Rgveda*, Purukutsa appears as a king of the Purus and a conqueror of the

39. *Rv.* IV-42-8, 9

अस्माकमत्र पितरस्त आसन्सप्त ऋषयो दौग्हि बध्यमाने ।
त आयजन्त त्रसदस्युमस्या इन्द्रं न वृत्तुरमध्यदिवम् ॥
पुरुकुत्सानि हि वामदाशद्योभिरिन्द्रावरुण नमोभिः ।
अथा राजानं त्रसदस्युमस्या वृत्रहणं ददथुरध्यदिवं ॥

40. Sāyaṇa's note on the Fourth second hymn of the fourth *Māṇḍala*

41. दौग्हि दुर्गहस्य पुत्रे पुरुकुत्से । Sāyaṇa on *Rv.* IV-42-8

42. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p.542

43. एतेऽएवा पूर्वेऽअहनी विश्वजिदतिरात्रस्तेन ह पुरुकुत्सो दौग्हिणोजः ऐक्षवाको राजा
तस्मादेतद्वृषिणाऽभ्यनूक्तमस्माकमत्र पितरस्तःआसन्सप्त ऋषयो दौग्हिण बध्यमानः इति ।
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XIII-5-4-5

Dāsas.⁴⁴ At one place in the *Rgveda*, he is said to be a contemporary of king Sudās.⁴⁵ But, whether he was an enemy or just only a contemporary of Sudās, is not clear. Because the Purus fought against Sudās in the *Dāśarājña* war. If Purukutsa was a contemporary of Sudās and being the ruler of the Purus, naturally he might have fought against Sudās.

According to Macdonell and Keith⁴⁶ and other scholars, the Rgvedic kings of these names belonged to the Puru family. Consequently F.E. Pargiter attempted to prove that the Rgvedic kings, Purukutsa and Trasadasyu, were different from the Aikṣvāku Purukutsa and Trasadasyu of the *Purāṇas*.⁴⁷ This is evidently false, because, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Purukutsa is called an Aikṣvāka.⁴⁸ But Paurava Purukutsa and Trasadasyu are absolutely unknown to the whole of Indian literature. In this connection P.L.Bhargava⁴⁹ observes as follows :

This is what we find in one passage of the *Rgveda* where its author Vāmadeva, who was a protégé of Somaka who belonged to the Paurava family, praises Trasadasyu,⁵⁰ for having given aid to the Purus. In another passage a Ṛṣi of the Bhāradvāja family, which ws closely connected with the Paurava family, speaks of the praise of Indra by the Purus and in justification of this praise,

44. *Rv.* IV-20-10

45. *Rv.* I-63-7

46. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p-541-542

47. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp-133-134 and 169-170

48. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-5

49. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, pp-143-144

50. उतो हि वां दात्रा सन्ति पूर्वा या पुरुभ्यस्तदस्युर्नितोशे ।

क्षेत्रासां ददथुरुर्वरासां घनं दस्युभ्यो अभिभूतिमुग्रम् ॥ *Rv.* IV-38-1

mentions the instances of persons favoured by Indra among whom the first is Purukutsa followed by Uśanas, Turvaśa and Yadu and Dabhīti.⁵¹ This is in no way connects Purukutsa with the Purus. On the other hand, these kings are never called Pauravas to regard Puru in apposition with Trasadasyu in a passage which in fact mentions four kings Vitahavya, Sudās, Trasadasyu, and Puru,⁵² it is absolutely unjustifiable. We can, on the same analogy and with for greater justification, regard the word Puru in hymn (I-63-7) to be in apposition with Sudās,⁵³ for the latter was certainly a Paurava according to the unanimous testimony of the Purāṇic literature, and his grand-father Divodāsa appears to be actually called a Puru in hymn (I-130-7) of the *Rgveda*.⁵⁴ It is thus clear that there is not an iota of truth in the belief that the *Rgveda* regards Purukutsa and Trasadasyu as Purus. Nor does any other branch of Indian literature regard them as Purus.

Nor can it be said that even if the R̄gvedic Purukutsa and Trasadasyu were not Purus, they were different from the Purāṇic Purukutsa and Trasadasyu. A descendant of the R̄gvedic Trasadasyu calls himself Tryaruṇa Trivṛṣṇa⁵⁵ and the *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa* calls him Trayaruṇa Traidhatva.⁵⁶ A near descendant of the Purāṇic Trasadasyu is also named Trayyaruna and his father is called Tridhanvā. It is clear that Trayyaruna Traidhanvā is simply a variant of Tryaruṇa Traidhatva. Thus, it is established beyond a

51. *Rv.* IV-20-10 to 13

52. *Rv.* VII-19-3

53. *Rv.* I-63-7

54. *Rv.* I-130-7

55. त्रैवृष्णो अने दशभिः सहस्रैश्वानर ऋयरुणश्चिकेत । *Rv.* V-27-1

56. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-3-12

shadow of doubt that the Purāṇic Purukutsa and Trsadasyu are identical with the kings of the same names in Vedic literature.

The *Rgveda* shows that Purukutsa was not the son of Māndhāṭṛ for he is called Daurgaha in a hymn,⁵⁷ while his son Trsadasyu is called Gairikṣita as well as Paurakutsya in another hymn.⁵⁸ This clearly means that at least two generations intervened between Māndhāṭṛ and Purukutsa, and this is the only difference between the Vedic and Purāṇic Purukutsas. But the numerous synochronisms, which occur in both the Vedic and Purāṇic literatures in connection with Purukutsa's immediate descendants, show that the *Purāṇas* have omitted at least two names between Māndhāṭa and Purukutsa, and these names are undoubtedly those of Durgaha and Girikṣita.

Trsadasyu :

Trsadasyu also is considered as one of the great R̥gvedic kings. The *Rgveda* mentions Trsadasyu as a son of Purukutsa.⁵⁹ He was a R̥gvedic seer also. As stated in *Rv.* IV. 42, he identifies himself with Indra and Varuṇa, on the basis of his being born by the grace of Indra and Varuṇa. When Purukutsa, son of Durgaha was 'in bonds,' the seven seers were the protectors of his kingdom. With their help, the queen of Purukutsāni propitiated Indra and Varuṇa who were pleased to bless her with a son, Trsadasyu. The relevant two *mantras* are as under :

57. *Rv.* IV-42-8

58. अस्य गैरिक्षितस्य क्रतुभिर्नु सच्चे । *Rv.* V-33-8

59. *Rv.* V-33-8; VII-19-3; VIII-19-6; IV-42-8

"The seven Ṛṣis were the protectors of this our kingdom when the son of Durgaha was in bonds; performing worship they obtained for his queen from the favour of Indra and Varuṇa, a son like Indra the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods.

The wife of Purukutsa propitiated you two, Indra and Varuṇa, with oblations and prostrations and therefore you gave her the king Trasadasyu, the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods."⁶⁰

Sayāṇa refers to an *Itihāsa* (history) contained in these *mantras*. According to him⁶¹ - "Purukatsa went in the battle against his enemies but, he was bound and mad impresion by the enemies. At this time his wife called Purukutsāṇī was very much afflicted and became anxious about the protection of the kingdom. At this time accidentally these arrived *Sapta Ṛṣis*, whom she worshipped with due hospitality. Also she informed about the prityable condition of the kingdom. With pleased mind *Sapta Ṛṣis* advised her to worship Indrā-Varuṇa with anstinted devotion. So too, the queen worshipped Indrā-Varuṇa, and by their blessings she obtain a son called Trasadasyu."

In the *Rgveda*, Trasadasyu is called Gairikṣita⁶² and his father Purukutsa was a descendant of Durgaha.⁶³ Therefore, this genealogy appears to be Durgaha > Girikṣita > Purukutsa > Trasadasyu. Trasadasyu was the ancestor of Ṭṛkṣi.⁶⁴ Trasadasyu's

60. *Rv.* IV-42-8, 9

61. पुरुकुत्सस्य महिषी दौगहि बन्धनस्थिते ।

पत्यावराजकं दृष्टवा राष्ट्रं पुत्रस्य लिप्सया ॥
यदृच्छया समायातान् सप्तर्षिन् पर्यपूजयत् ।
ते च प्रीताः पुनः प्रोचुर्यजेन्द्रावरुणौ भ्रशाम् ॥
सा चेन्द्रावरुणाविष्टवा त्रसदस्युमजीजनत् ।
इतिहासमिमं जाननृषिभूते ऋचाविह ॥ Sāyaṇa

62. *Rv.* V-33-8

63. *Rv.* IV-42-8

64. येभिस्तृक्षिं वृषणा त्रासदस्यवं महे क्षत्राय जिन्वतः । *Rv.* VIII-22-7

chronological position is not clear in the *Rgveda*. But in one *mantra* of the *Rgveda*, his father Purukutsa appears to be a contemporary of king Sudās.⁶⁵ The *Rgveda* refers to a king Kuruśravaṇa, who is also called Trāsadasasyava ‘descendant of Trasadasyu’.⁶⁶ Kuruśravaṇa’s father was Mitrātithi and son Upamaśravas. But relation of Mitrātithi to Trkṣī is not clear in the *Rgveda*. In this connection Macdonell and Keith say - ‘Trasadasyu himself seems to have been an energetic king. His people, the Purus, were settled on the Sarasvatī, which was no doubt, the stream in the middle country, that locality according well with the later union of the Purus with the Kuru people, who inhabited that country. This union is exemplified in the person of Kuruśravaṇa.’⁶⁷

Another descendant of Trasadasyu was Tryaruṇa Traivṛṣṇa.⁶⁸ According to the *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, he is called Trayaruṇa Traidhātva ‘descendant of Tridhātu’.⁶⁹ The order of these two predecessors of Tryaruṇa cannot be determined in any way from Vedic literature. The *Purāṇas* mention, a prince named Tridhanvan preceded Trayyaruṇa in the succession. On this confusion, P.L.Bhargava opines that it is clear that Trayyaruṇa Traidhanva is simply a variant of Tryaruṇa Traidhātva.⁷⁰

Trasadasyu appears in several *Brāhmaṇas* as a famous sacrificer of the ancient time.⁷¹ According to *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, Trasadasyu, Para Āṭñāra, and Kakśivant Auśija are called “ancient great kings.”⁷²

65. *Rv.* I-63-7

66. कुरुश्रवणमावृणी राजानं त्रासदस्यवम् । *Rv.* X-33-4

67. Macdonel and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. 1, p-327

68. त्रैवृष्णो अग्ने दशभिः सहस्रैर्वेष्वानरं ऋग्यरुणाश्चिकेत । *Rv.* V-27-1

69. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-3-12

70. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p-144

71. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXV-16

72. एवं हैवैतमुद्गीथं परं आट्णारः कक्षीवांस्त्रसदस्युरिति पूर्वं महाराजाः श्रोत्रियाः सहस्रपुत्रमुपनिषेदुः ।

Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa, II-6-11

5. Dānastutis

It is a fact that the R̄gvedic hymns are generally meant for purpose of sacrifice. Such hymns however, contain the fact of eloquence of seers praising the god to induce him to grant favourable voice and generosity. The R̄gvedic hymns inherit the description of some definite families who were at the spiritual climax of the sacrificial ceremony. Instruction of such sacrificial ceremonies in course of time became the source of livelihood of such families. In various places (II-2-9., X-64-12 etc), the composition of the hymns is compared to milch-cow, taking care of the family of the seer. At times, these seers with their sons were moving to many kings where they used to offer their service of chanting the *Mantras*. At the time of the sacrifice when such sages bring forward newest compositions and king was giving appropriate *Dakṣiṇa*.

The *Dakṣiṇa* itself is glorified in the *R̄gveda*, X-107. The idea in this hymn is that the *Dakṣiṇa* is to be considered as a definite gift for the gods and as a divine sacrifice-exactly. At the same time, it is learnt from these hymns, as also from others wherein the *Dakṣiṇa* consists of that which the poet longs for. Mostly, the poet expresses his expectation or his thanks only in general. At times, however, he makes exact sketches and clothes his thanks directly with regard to the offering the gift in a definite hymns or a *mantra*. Such a hymn or such a *mantra* has the characteristic of a *Dānastuti*.

The expression *Dānastuti* rather occurs for the first time in the *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-45, where, it is determined, that the concluding pair of verses (38,39) of the hymn VIII-15 of the *R̄gveda*, are considered according to the tradition as the *Dānastuti* of king Kaśu.

The constituents 'Stu' and 'Dāna' occur side by side in the *Rgveda*.¹ Even there are still other technical expressions in the later literature which may be designated as *Dānastuti*. However, every *mantra* in which the thank for the gift is expressed is not recognised in the Indian annotated literature as *Dānastuti*. One employs the designation in narrow sense for an almost definite form of saying of thanks. The verses recognised as *Dānastuti* in the *Bṛhaddevatā* and *Anukramanī*, form hymns of *Dānastutis*.

Above all, the accounts which the *Anukramanī* gives in its introductory chapter is important: राजा॑ं च दानस्तुतयः। (II-23). The *Dānastutis* are even dedicated to kings. Indian commentators consider as a definite characteristic, that only a royal donor should have such a *Dānastuti* and this should not find place in the interior of a true hymn.

The constituents *Stu* and *Dāna* is already mentioned in the *Rgveda*, V-33-6. Even there are still other technical expression in the later literature called *Raibhīs*, *Nārāśamīśis*, and even at times *Gāthās*. These three designations already occur together in the *Rgveda*.²

Raibhīs : The word *Raibhīs* derived from *Rebha* (bard). Therefore, *Raibhīs* are verses of the bards. The three *Mantras* of the *Atharvaveda* XX-127-4,5,6, are called *Raibhīs*. They form an introduction to the praise of Parikṣita. *Gāthā* is to be supplemented by *Raibhīs*.

1. स न एर्णि वसवानो रथी॑ं दा॒ः प्राय॑ सुषे॒ तुविमघस्य दानम्। *Rv.* V-33-6

2. रैभ्यासीदुनुदेयी नाराशंसी न्योचनी।

सूर्याया भद्रमिद्वासो गाथयैति परिष्कृतम्॥ *Rv.* X-85-6

Nārāśamīśis : The word *Nārāśamīśis* consists of two elements *Nara* and *Śamīsa* and are referred in the *Rgveda*.³ In the *Nirukta*, Yāska says - येन नराः प्रशस्यन्ते स नाराशंसो मन्त्रः।⁴ A *mantra* in which the lords are praised is called *Nārāśamīśa*. The *Nārāśamīśis* are concerned with the living princes and with eulogy of their generosity. The *Bṛhaddevatā* says : “the stanzas in which the deeds of kings and their gifts, great, small and middling, are told should be understood to be called ‘Laudations of Men’ (*Nārāśamīśi*), as the praise of kings (is expressed) by them in the tenth *māṇḍala* of the *Rgveda*.⁵ According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,⁶ *Nābhānēdiṣṭha-* *Sūkta*. (X-62) in the *Rgveda* is a *Nārāśamīśa-Sūkta*. Even the hymns I-161 and IV-37 are according to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* - अर्भवं नाराशंसम्।⁷ wherein, the *Rbhus* are said to be men (ऋभवो हि नरो मनुष्याः।). Sāyaṇa’s explanation of the word *Nārāśamīśa* नराः शास्यन्ते (कथ्यन्ते) यस्मिन् सूक्ते तत्राशंसम्।⁸ “When in a hymn, men are praised then it is a *Nārāśamīśa*.” Thus, the *Nārāśamīśis* essentially designate that which is called as *Dānastuti* in later times.

Gāthās : *Gāthā* in the *Rgveda* usually means only ‘song’. The expression ‘*Gāthās*’ in this context is to be comprehended has even the same significance. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the verse ‘आसन्दीवती धान्यादम्’, is designated as a यज्ञगाथा।⁹ In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, it is simply named as *Gāthā*.¹⁰ The *Atharvaveda* refers

3. *Rv. II-34-6 ; VI-24-2; III-16-4*

4. *Yāska, Nirukta*, IX-9

5. कर्मणि याभि कथितानि राजाम् दानानि चोच्चवचमध्यमानि ।

नाराशंसीरिति ऋचस्ताः प्रतीयाद् याभिः स्तुतिर्दाशतयिषु राजाम्॥ *Bṛhaddevatā*, III-154.

6. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VI-27-14

7. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, V-13-11

8. Sāyaṇa on *Rv. X-85-6*

9. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII-21-21

10. *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-2

to the *Gāthās* to be the special *Mantras* of *Indragāthā* and others. For eg, in the *Sūkta* XX-128 (12 to 016) of the *Atharvaveda*, the five *mantras* are considered to be *Indragāthā*, particularly, the *Gāthās* treat of the *Yajña*.

The *Dānastuti* and *Nārāśamīśis* are compared with the post-Vedic ‘*Praśastis*’ (song praise). The *Praśastis* can however be seen in the inscriptions. The praise of the princes, their was deeds, their booty and generosity are the content thereif. The *Rgvedānukramanī* of Kātyāyana, states in its introductory chapter : राजां च दानस्तुतयः।. Hence, the *Dānastutis* and *Nārāśamīśis* may be compared with the *Praśastis* of the Gupta kings. For example, Bhitari-pillar inscription of Skandagupta states as follow :¹¹

1 सर्वं राजोच्छेतुः पृथिव्यामप्रतिरथस्य चतुरुदधिसलिला स्वादितयशसो धनदवरुणेन्द्रान्तकसमस्य ।
2 कृतान्तपरशोः न्यायागतानेकगोहिरण्य कओटिप्रदस्य चिरोत्सन्ना श्वमेधाहर्तुर्महाराज श्रीगुप्तपौत्रस्य ।

The modern Vedic scholars found that the *Dānastutis* show their little or more distinct historical accounts. Winternitz writes : “In the *Dānastutis* however are always mentioned the names of pious donors and they are concerned undoubtedly with historical results or with real events. There, they are also important.”¹²

Dānastutis :

Rgveda, I-100-16 and 17

The hymn I-100 of the *Rgveda*, is attributed to Rjraśva, Ambariṣa, Sahadeva, Bhāyamāna and Surādhas, the sons of the

11. Raj Bali Pandey, Historical and Literary Inscriptions, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1962, p-99.

12. Winternitz, Geschichte Der Indischen Literature, Vol. I, p-99.

seer Vṛṣāgira. These names themselves are found in the *Mantras* 16 and 17. Mostly, the seer chants the hymn in which he invokes Indra to help his kings who are preparing probably for war. He praises in these two *Mantras* the reward that he has received. He conclude that victory may be attained through Indra's help. The *Mantras* are as below:¹³

"The red and black courses, long-limbed, well-caparisoned, and celestial and harnessed, well-pleased, to the yoke of the chariot in which the showerer of benefits is conveyed, for the enrichment of Rjraśva and is recognized amongst human hosts.

Indra, showerer of benefits the Vṛṣagiras, Rjraśva and his companions Ambarīṣa, Sahadeva, Bhayamāna and Suradhas, address to you this propitiatory praise."

Rv. IV-15-7 to 10

In this hymn, seven to ten *mantras* speak of *Dānastuti*. Vāmadeva Gautama is the seer of this hymn. The *mantras* are as follows : ¹⁴

"When the prince, the son of Sahadeva, promised to present me with two horses, I withdrew not when called before him.

13. *Rv. I-100-16,17*

रोहिच्छ्यावा सुमदशुर्ललामीर्थुक्षा राये ऋज्राश्वस्य
वृषण्वन्तं बिभ्रती धूर्षु रथं मन्द्रा चिकेत नाहुषीषु विशु ॥ 16 ॥
एतत्यत्त इन्द्र वृष्ण उक्तं वार्षगिरा अभि गृणन्ति राथः
ऋज्राश्वः प्रष्टिभिरम्बरीषः सहदेवो भयमानः सुराथाः ॥ 17 ॥

14. *Rv. IV-15-7 to 10*

बेदद्यन्मा हरिभ्यां कुमारः साहदेव्यः । अच्छा न हूत उदरम् ॥ 7 ॥
उत त्या यजता हरी कुमारात्साहदेव्यात् । प्रयता सद्य आ ददे ॥ 8 ॥
एष वां देवावश्विना कुमारः साहदेव्यः । दीर्घायुरस्तु सोमकः ॥ 9 ॥
तं युवां देवावश्विना कुमारं साहदेव्यम् । दीर्घायुषं कृणोतन ॥ 10 ॥

But immediately accepted those two excellent and well-trained horses from the prince, the son of Sahadeva.

Divine Aśvins, may this prince, Somaka, the son of Sahadeva, your worshipper, enjoy long-life.

Divine Aśvins, do you, two make the prince the son of Sahadeva, long-lived."

Observation :

Dānastuti mantras of this hymn are concerned with Somaka Sāhadeva a prince. The seer explains that he has received two cloths as gifts from king Somaka. According to *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,¹⁵ this prince Somaka is one of the Śrñjayas. In this hymn, the fourth *mantra* refers to Śrñjaya Daivavāta with his sacrificial fire.¹⁶ Three generations of Śrñjayas as: Śrñjaya > Sahadeva > Somaka.

Rv. IV-32-19 to 24

In this hymn, the *Mantras* 19 to 24 deal with the *Dānastuti*. Vāmadeva Gautama is the Seer of this hymn. The *mantras* 17 and 18 express the desire for a *Dakṣiṇa* which indeed is towards Indra. In the *Mantras* 19 to 21, Indra is invoked as giver in abundance. The donor is not mentioned in this *Dānastuti*. The seer Vāmadeva Gautama describes the gifts as ten jars with golden things and the two brown mars. The *Dānastuti* *mantas* run :¹⁷

15. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII-34

16. अयं यः सूज्यये पुरो दैववाते समिद्यते । Rv. IV-15-4

17. Rv. IV-32-19 to 24

दश ते कलशानां हिरण्यानामधीमहि । भूरिदा असि वृत्रहन् ॥ 19 ॥
भूरिदा भूरि देहि नो मा दध्रं भूर्या भर । भूरि घेदिन्द्र दित्ससि ॥ 20 ॥
भूरिदा हृसि श्रुतः पुरुत्रा शूर वृत्रहन् । आ नो भजस्व राधसि ॥ 21 ॥

"May we obtain from you, ten golden ewers, for you, slayer of Vṛtra, are a bountiful giver.

A bountiful giver are you, Indra: give bountifully to us; give not little; bring much; for verily you desire to give much.

Verily you are renowned amongst many as a bountiful giver; here, slayer of Vṛtra, make us sharers in wealth.

Wise Indra, I praise your brown horses; bestower of cows you are not regardless of your worshippers; with those two steeds terrify not our cattle.

Like two puppets on an arranged, new and slender stage, your two brown steeds are brilliant at sacrifices.

You two innocuous brown steeds are sufficient at sacrifices for me, whether going to them in a wagon drawn by oxen, or going without such a conveyance."

Rv. V-18-5

The small hymn V-18 of five *Mantras* refers to *Dānastuti* in its last *Mantra*. The former *mantras* form an introduction to the *Dānastuti*. A seer Dvita Mṛktavāhā Ātreya from the Atri family describes that he has received the gift of fifty horses. The donor is not mentioned here. It runs as below:¹⁸

प्र ते बभू विचक्षण शंसामि गोषणो नपात्। माभ्यां गा अनु शिश्रथः॥ 22॥
कनीनकेव विद्रधे नवे दुष्पदे अर्थके । बभू यामेषु शोभेते ॥ 23॥
अरं म उस्याम्णोऽरमनुस्ययाम्णे । बभूस्यामेष्वस्त्रिधा॥ 24॥

18. Rv. V-18-5

ये मे पञ्चशतं ददुरश्वानां सधस्तुति ।
द्युमदग्ने महि श्रवो बृहत्कृथि मधोनां नृवदप्र नृणाम्॥ 5॥

"Immortal Agni, bestow upon those, opulent men, who upon (my) praise of you, gave to me, fifty horses and brilliant, ample and abundant food, supporting numerous dependents."

Rv. V-27

This hymn of six *Mantras* may be designated as *Dānastuti*. The *Anukramaṇī*,¹⁹ states that the seer of this hymn is either king (mentioned therein) or Atri. The seer is found to be in acknowledgement of the gifts from different kings on different occasions. First three *mantras* describe the gift of Tryāruṇa of the Purukutsa family on two occasions; and four to six, king Aśvamedha. The *Sūkta* runs as under:²⁰

"Agni, who are the protector of the good, most wise, powerful and opulent; Tryāruṇa, the son of Trivṛṣṇa, has become renowned, Vaiśvānara, in that he has bestowed upon me a pair of cattle with a waggon, and with ten thousands of treasure.

Agni, Vaiśvānara, you are deservedly praised and exalted by us; bestow happiness upon Tryāruṇa, who gives me hundreds of Suvarnas, twenty cattle and a pair of burden-bearing horses.

As Tryāruṇa, pleased by the eulogies of me who have many children asks earnestly the gifts upon me, so does Trasadasyu, desirous Agni, of your valued favour through your exceeding praise.

19. *Anukramāṇī*, V-27

20. *Rv. V-27*

अनस्वन्ता सत्परिमामि हे मे गावा चेतिष्ठो असुरो मघोनः
त्रैवृष्णो अग्ने दशभिः सहस्रैर्वैश्वानर ऋयरुणाश्चिकेत ॥ १ ॥
यो मे शता च विंशतीं च गोनां हरी च युक्ता सुशुरा ददाति
वैश्वानर सुष्टुतो वावृथानोऽग्ने यच्छ ऋयरुणाय शर्म ॥ २ ॥

When the king Aśvamedha gives to him who solicits of him as a benefactors, saying (bestow wealth) upon me and comes to him with a verse in your praise, do you, Agni, grant intelligence to the king who wishes to offer sacrifice to you.

Whose hundred robust oxen yield me delight, as the triple-mixed Soma, the offering of Aśvamedha gratifies you.

The *Bṛhaddevatā* describes in the three half verses:²¹ “In the (hymn) addressed to Agni, ‘with a wagon,’ the seer Atri himself, pleased with his gifts proclaimed these (kings) as royal seers, so say some authorities. There also appears a prayer to Agni on their behalf in consequence of (their request). The thousand, three hundred and twenty kine, (and) a golden wagon with two oxen, king Tryāruṇa gave to Atri. And Aśvamedha (gave) a hundred oxen, Trasadasyu much wealth.”

Rv. V-30-12 to 15

In this hymn, 12 to 15 *mantras* are evident to deal with the *Dānastutis*. The seer Babhru (of the Atri family) of this hymn, sings the *Dānastuti* of Rṇañcaya, the king of the tribe of Ruśama people.

एवा ते अग्ने सुमतिं चकानो नविष्टाय नवमं त्रसदस्युः
यो मे गिरस्तुविजातस्य पूर्विर्युक्तेनाभि त्र्यरुणो गृणाति ॥ 3 ॥
यो म इति प्रवोचत्यश्वमेधाय सूरये । दददुचा सन्ति यते ददन्मेधामृतायते ॥ 4 ॥
यस्य मा परुषाः शतमुद्धर्षयन्त्युक्षणः । अश्वमेधस्य दानाः सोमा इव त्र्याशिरः ॥ 5 ॥

21. Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, V-29,30,31

दानतुष्टः शशंसैतान् राजर्षिनिति केचन ।
अयुतं च गवां त्रीणि शतान्यथ च विंशतिम् ॥
सौवर्णं शकटं गोभ्यां त्र्यरुणोऽदान्नृपोऽत्रये ।
अश्वमेधः शतं चोक्षणां त्रसदस्युर्धनं बहु ॥

In all these four *mantras*, the seer refers to 'Soma-juice' indicating Soma-ritual in honour of Indra, praised above. The *mantras* are as below:²²

"The Ruśamas giving me four thousand cows, Agni, have done well, we have accepted the wealth, the donations of the leader of leaders Rṇāñcaya.

The Ruśamas, Agni, have presented to me a beautiful abode, with thousands of cattle; the sharp libations have exhilarated Indra upon the breaking up of the (gloom) investing night.

The (gloom) investing night has dispersed with the down upon the appearance of Rṇāñcaya, the king of the Ruśamas; Babhru being summoned, going like a fleet courser, has received the four thousand cattle.

We have accepted, Agni, the four thousand cattle from the Ruśamas and the glowing, the golden jar prepared for the solemnity."

In this connection, the *Bṛhaddevatā* says - "others say that he (Atri) addressed this hymn to the kings, for one cannot give to oneself, and the seer received the gifts from each king. Rṇāñcaya chose the seer Babhru, son of Atri, to officiate as priest at a Soma

22. *Rv. V-30-12 to 15*

भद्रमिदं रुशमा अग्ने अक्रनावां चत्वारि ददतः सहस्रा ।
 ऋणञ्ज्यस्य प्रयता मधानि प्रत्यग्रभीष्म नृतमस्य नृणाम् ॥ 12 ॥
 सुपेशसं माव स्वजन्त्यस्तं गवां सहस्रै रुशमासो अग्ने ।
 तीव्रा इन्द्रममनुः सुतासोऽल्कोर्युष्टौ परितक्ष्यायाः ॥ 13 ॥
 औच्छत्सा रात्री परितक्ष्या याँ ऋणञ्ज्यये राजनि रुशमानाम्
 अत्यो न वाजी रघुरज्यमानो बध्मश्चत्वार्यसनत्सहस्रा ॥ 14 ॥
 चतुःसहस्रं गव्यस्य पश्वः प्रत्यग्रभीष्म रुशमेष्वग्ने ।
 घर्मश्चित्तसः प्रवृजे य आसीदयस्मयस्तम्वादाम विप्राः ॥ 15 ॥

- sacrifice in which a thousand sacrificial fees were bestowed. So he (Babhru) sacrificed for him (Ṛañcaya). And the king of Ruśamas gave him four thousand four hundred cows and a golden caldron. And he received golden caldrons for the *Pravargya* rites. And having received them, the seer as he went along, was questioned on the way by the middle Agni as well as by Indra; and he related all this with the four stanzas 'this good; '²³

Rv. V-33-7 to 10

In this hymn seven to ten *mantras* are referred to *Dānastuti*. It is a *Dānastuti* of the seer Samvaraṇa received gifts from patrons Trasadasyu, Girikṣita, Vidatha Marutāśva, Cyāyamana, and Dhanvaya Lakṣamaṇya. The former *mantras* indicate Soma ritual in honour of Indra praised there. The *Dānastuti mantras* run: ²⁴

"Hero, Indra, with your protection defend up, praising and worshipping you, and be propitiated by drinking of the well-effused and agreeable *Soma*-juice that yield (a defensive) covering in combat.

23. Śaunaka, *Bṛahaddevatā*, V-32 to 36

राजः प्रति च तत्सूक्तं बभाष इति केचन ।
आत्मा हि नात्मने दद्यात् अग्रहीनृपतेन्मृषिः ॥
अत्रेः सुतमृषिं बध्मूम् आरत्विज्याय ऋणज्वयः ।
सहस्रदक्षिणे सोमे वन्ने तं सोऽप्ययाजयत् ॥
ददौ च रौशमो राजा सहस्राणि शतानि च ।
तस्मै चत्वारि चत्वारि महावीरं च काज्चनम् ॥
प्रवर्गेषु महावीराः सौवर्णस्तस्य चाभवन् ।
प्रतिगृह्य ऋषिर्गच्छन् मध्यसेनानिना पथि ॥
पृष्ठ इन्द्रेण चाचख्यौ भद्रं चतसृभिश्च तत् ।

24. Rv. V-33-7 to 10

एवा न इन्द्रोतिभिरव पाहि गृणतः शूर कारुन् ।
उत त्वचं ददतो वाजसातौ पिप्रीहि मध्वः सुषुतस्य चारोः ॥ 7 ॥

May those ten bring horses, the gift tome of the pious gold-possessing Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa of the race of Girikṣita, convey me to the sacrifice, and may I proceed quickly with the rites.

Or, may those bay, well-actioned horses, the donation of Vidatha, the son of Marutāśva, (convey me); or may the thousands of treasure which he was bestowing upon and giving to me, entitled to respect, and the ornaments which he presented to decorate the person, contribute to the ceremony.

Or, may the bright and active steeds bestowed upon me by Dhvanya, the son of Lakṣmaṇa (bear me); the riches, endowed with greatness, that have been presented, have passed to the dwelling of the seer Saṁvaraṇa, like cows to their stalls.”

Rv. V-34-9

The last *mantra* of this hymn contains an element of *Dānastuti*. The seer Saṁvaraṇa describes that who acquires the favour of Agni for his patron, Śatri, the giver of thousand (gifts), the son of Agniveśa. The eighth *mantra* too in this *Sūkta* is related with *Dānastuti mantra*. The last two *mantras* are as under:²⁵

उत त्ये मा पौरुकुत्सस्य सूरेस्त्रसदस्योहिरणिनो राणाः।
वहन्तु मा दश श्येतासो अस्य गौरीक्षितस्य क्रतुभिर्नु सञ्चे॥ 8॥
उत त्ये मा मारुताश्वस्य शोणाः क्रत्वामघासो विदथस्य रातौ।
सहस्रा मे च्यवतानो ददान आनूकमर्यो वपुषे नार्चत्॥ 9॥
उत त्ये मा ध्वन्यस्य जुष्टा लक्ष्मण्यस्य सुरुचो यतानाः।
मह्ना राय संवरणस्य ऋषेर्वर्जं न गावः प्रयता अपि ग्मन्॥ 10॥

25. Rv. V-34-9

सहस्रसामाग्निवेशिं गृणीषे शत्रिमग्न उपमां केतुमर्यः।
तस्मा आपः संयतः पीपयन्त तस्मिन्क्षत्रममवल्लेषमस्तु॥ 9॥

"When Indra, the possessor of opulence, discriminates between two men, both wealthy, and exerting themselves (against each other) for the sake of valuable cattle; he takes one of them as his associate, causing (his adversaries) to tremble, and the agitator (of clouds), together with the Maruts, bestows upon him herds of cattle."

"I Ārya, Agni, praise (king) Śatri, the son of Agniveśa the bestower of thousands, a type for comparison; may the collected waters yield him abundance; may wealth, strength and glory be upon him."

Rv. V-36-6

This also is a small *Dānastuti*. The *mantras* of this hymn are in praise of Indra. The seer Prabhūvasu praises the gifts of two red horses and other three hundred cattle by the young king Śrutaratha.

"Maruts, may all men bow in obedience to that youthful Śrutaratha, the possessor of abundance, who has bestowed upon us to bay steeds accompanied by three hundred cattle."²⁶

Rv. V-52-17

The last *mantra* in this hymn consisting of seventeen *mantras*, called *Dānastuti*. The seer Śyāvāśva informs that he has obtained a cow and horse as gifts on the river Yamunā. The former two

26. यो रोहितौ वाजिनौ वाजिनीवान्त्रिभिः शतैः सचमनावदिष्ट ।
यूने समस्मै क्षितयो नमन्तां श्रुतरथाय मरुतो दुवोया ॥६॥ Rv. V-36-6

mantras are closely related with the *Dānastuti*.²⁷ The Maruts themselves appear here as donor to give over the gifts. This *mantra* describes as below:

"May the seven times seven all-potent Maruts, aggregated as a single troop, bestow upon me hundreds of cattle; may I possess wealth of cows, renowned upon the banks of the Yamunā may I possess wealth of horses."²⁸

Rv. V-61-5 to 10

According to *Bṛhaddevatā*, the entire hymn (V-61) is considered to be '*Itihāsa Sūkta*'.²⁹ In this hymn of nineteen *mantras*, fifth to tenth *mantras* refer to *Dānastuti*. The seer Śyāvāśva, in praising Maruts, is referred to a gift of a herd of horses and cattle and hundred sheep etc. He received the gifts from the king Taranta. Also king Purumiḥa's gift is referred to in the nineth *mantra*. The *Dānastuti* *mantras* are as follows;³⁰

"She Śaśīyasi, who has thrown her arm round the hero Taranta, who was eulogized by Śyāvāśva, has given me cattle comprising horses, and cows, and hundreds of sheep.

27. Rv. V-52-15,16

नू सन्वान एषां देवाँ अच्छा न वक्षणा ।
दाना सचेता सूरिभिर्यामश्रुतेभिरज्जिभिः॥ 15 ॥
प्र ये मे बन्धवेषे गां वोचन्त सूरतः पृथ्विं वोचन्त मातरम् ।
अथा पितरमिष्मिणं रुद्रं शिक्वसः॥ 16 ॥

28. Rv. V-52-17

सप्त मे सप्त शाकिन एकमेका शता दुः
यमुनायामधि श्रुतमुद्राद्यो गव्यं मृजे नि राधो अश्वं मृजे॥ 17 ॥

29. Story mentioned.

30. Rv. V-61-5 to 10

सनत्साश्वं पशुमुत गव्यं शतावयम् ।
शावाश्वस्तुताय या दोर्बारायोपबर्बहत् ॥ 5 ॥

Śāśiyasi, though a female, is more excellent than a man who reverences not the gods, nor bestows wealth.

For she discerns one who suffers pain, one who is in want, or one desirous of any thing, and directs her mind towards the gods.

And eulogizing him, I proclaim that the man, her other half is as it were, uncommanded, for he is ever the same in munificent donations.

Yong and affable, she has explained to me, Śyāvasva, the road and two ruddy horses have borne me to the valiant and renowned Purumiḥha.

Who the son of Vaidadaśva, has given me a hundred of cattle, and like Taranta, many precious gifts."

Rv. VI-45-31 to 33

The last three *mantras* of this hymn consisting of thirty-three *mantras* describe *Dānastuti*. The seer Śamyu Bārhaspatya, the son of Br̥haspati praises Br̥bu who gave one thousand cows as a gift. The former *mantras* praise in honour of Indra. The *mantras* are as follows:³¹

उत त्वा स्त्री शशीयसी पुंसो भवति वस्यसी । आदेवत्रादराधसः ॥ 6 ॥
 वि या जानाति जसुरिं वि तृष्णन्तं वि कामिनम् । देवत्रा क्रणुते मनः ॥ 7 ॥
 उत घा नेमो अस्तुतः पुमाँ इति ब्रुवे पणिः । स वैरदेय इत्समः ॥ 8 ॥
 उत मेऽपद्युवतिर्ममन्दुषी प्रति श्यावाय वर्तनिम् ।
 वि रोहिता पुरुमीळ्हाय येमतुविप्राय दीर्घयशसे ॥ 9 ॥
 यो मे धेनूनां शतं वैददश्चिर्यथा ददत् । तरन्तइव मंहना ॥ 10 ॥

31. Rv. VI-45-31 to 33

अधि बृबुः पणीनां वर्षिष्टे मूर्धन्नस्थात् ।
 उरुः कक्षो न गाङ्गयः ॥ 31 ॥

"Bṛbu presided over the high places of the Paṇis, like the elevated bank of the Gaṅgā

Of when, prompt as the wind, the liberal donation of thousands (of cattle) has been quickly given to me soliciting a gift.

Whom, therefore, we all, who are the professor and bestowers of praise ever commend, as the pious Bṛbu, the donor of thousands (of cattle) the receiver of thousands (of laudations)."

Observation:

Bṛbu is described as a most generous giver (*sahasra-dātama*) and as at the head of the Paṇis. According to the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,³² seer Bhāradvaja received gifts from Bṛbu Takṣan. The *Anukramaṇī* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* says, he is a Takṣan (carpenter).³³ But considering the fact that Takṣan is not found as an epithet of Bṛbu in the *Rgveda*. *Manusmṛti*³⁴ says that he gives many cows to Bhāradvaja who suffered hunger in a desolate forest. Ṣadguruśya informs in his commentary on *Anukramaṇī* that Bṛbu Takṣan was a devotee of Indra and a relative of Śamyu. Modern scholar opine: Apparently Bṛbu was a Paṇi, though the words of the *Rgveda* might be taken to mean that he

यस्य वायोरिव द्रवद्ध्रा रातिः सहस्राणी ।
सद्यो दानाय मंहते ॥ 32 ॥
तत्सु नो विश्वे अर्य आ सदा गृणन्ति कारवः ।
बृबुं सहस्रदातमं सूरीं सहस्रसातमम् ॥ 33 ॥

32. *Śāṅkhāyana Śruta Sūtra*, XVI-11-11

33. *Anukramaṇī*, VI-45

34. *Manusmṛti*, X-107

भरद्वाजः क्षुदार्तस्तु सुपुत्रो विजने वने ।
ब्रह्मीर्गाः प्रतिजग्राह वृद्धोस्तक्षणो महातपाः ॥

was one who had overthrown them entirely. Griffith holds that Panī must here certainly mean a merchant in a good sense, Br̥bu being then a merchant prince.³⁵

Rv. VI-47-22 to 25

Garga Bhāradvāja is the seer of this hymn. Different kings and priests have been referred to in this hymn. The twenty-second to twenty-fifth *mantras* of this hymn consist of thirty-one *Mantras Dānastuti*.³⁶

"Prastoka has given to your worshipper, Indra, ten purses of gold, and ten horses, and we have accepted this treasure from Divodāsa, the spoil won by Atithigva from Śambara.

I have received ten horses, ten purses, clothes and ample food, and ten lumps of gold from Divodāsa.

Aśvatha has given to Pāyu ten chariots with their horses, and a hundred cows to the priests.

The son of Sṛñjaya has reverenced the Bhāradvāja who have accepted such great wealth for the good of all men. "

Observation :

Here, three kings are mentioned. They are: Prastoka, Divodāsa, Aśvatha. The connection of the *Dānastuti* with the latter

35. Griffith, Vedic index, Vol-I, p.471

36. Rv. VI-47-22 to 25

प्रस्तोक इन्द्रु राधसस्त इन्द्र दश कोशयीर्दश वाजिनोऽदात्।
दिवोदासादतिथिगवस्य राधः शाम्बरं वसु प्रत्यग्रभीष्म॥ 22॥
दशाश्वान्दश कोशान्दश वस्त्राधिभोजना।
दशो हिरण्यपिण्डान्दिवोदासादसानिषम्॥ 23॥
दशा रथान्नप्रष्टिमतः शतं गा अथर्वभ्यः। अश्वथः पायवेऽदात्॥ 24॥
महि राधो विश्वजन्यं दधानान्बरद्वाजान्त्सार्ज्ययो अभ्ययष्ट॥ 25॥

mantras is clearly indicated here. The principal event, about which it is alluded to here is the war of king Divodāsa with the robber Varcin and Śambara. The twentieth *mantas* expressly describes the different position of the seer whose cows are robbed. The twenty-first *mantra* presents another imagery.

Here Prastoka also is a generous donor. According to the Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra,³⁷ Bhāradvāja obtained gifts from Prastoka Śṛnjaya. He is descendant of Śṛñjayas.

The Aśvatha is celebrated in this *Dānastuti* as having given gifts to Pāyu. He is identified with Divodāsa by Griffith,³⁸ but it is impossible to be certain of this identification.

Rv. VI-63-9 and 10

The ninth and tenth *mantras* of this hymn describe *Dānastuti*. The Aśvins are invoked here. Here, seer Bhāradvāja refers to all the gifts which he has received from different kings Puraya, Sumilha, Peruka, Śanda and Purupanthan. The *Dānastuti* *mantras* are as below;³⁹

“May the two straight-going, light-moving, (mares) of Puraya be mine; may the hundred cows belonging to Sumilha, may Śāṅda bestow upon me ten handsome golden chariots, and obedient, valiant, and well-favoured (dependants)

37. Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, XVI-11

38. Griffith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.

39. Rv. VI-63-9

उत म ऋजे पुरयस्य रथीं सुमीळ्हे शतं पेरुके च पक्वा
शाण्डो दद्धिरणिः स्मद्विष्टीन्दश वशासो अभिषाच ऋष्वान् ॥ 9 ॥

May Purupantha, Nāsatyas, grant to him who praises you, hundreds and thousands of horses; may he give them, heroes, to Bhāradvāja; achievers of great deeds, may the Rāksasas be slain."

Rv. VII-18-21 to 25

The eighteenth hymn of the seventh *Māṇḍala* gives a vivid description of the *Dāsarajñā* war. Sudāsa king of the Bharatas won victory over ten kings, with the help of Indra. Here, Vasiṣṭha praises the donations received by him from king Sudās after successful completion of the *Yajñā*. The twenty-first to twenty-fifth *mantras* of this hymn consisting of twenty-five *mantras* describe *Dānastuti*. The *Dānastuti mantras* are already described.⁴⁰

Rv VIII-1-30 to 33

In this hymn the *mantras* from thirty to thirty-three deal with the *Dānastuti*. This hymn is uttered by different seers. viz. Pragātha, Medhyātithi, Plāyogi Āsaṅga, Śaśvati. This hymn dedicates to Indra. According to *Bṛhaddevatā*,⁴¹ his own gift to a seer is praised by king Āsaṅga. The respective *mantras* are as under :

"Praise (me) praise (me), Medhyātithi, for amongst the wealthy we are the most liberal donors of wealth to you; praise (me) as one who out-strips a horse in speed, follows the right path, and bears the best earns;

When with faith I harness the docile horses in the chariot, (praise me) for the descendant of Yadu, possessed of cattle, know how to distribute desirable riches.

40. *Rv. VII-18-21 to 25*

41. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-41

स्त्रियं सन्तं पुमांसं तम् आसङ्गं कृतवानृषिः।
स्वस्य दानं सुहीत्याभिश् चतुर्भिः परिकीर्तितम्॥

(Praise me, saying), "He who has presented riches to me with a golden purse; may this rattling chariot of Āsaṅga carry of all the treasures (of enemy).

(So praise me, saying) "Āsaṅga, the son of Plāyoga, has given more than others, Agni by tens of thousands; ten times (number of) vigorous and brilliant oxen (given by him) to me, issue forth like the reeds of the lake."⁴²

Observation :

The *Anukramanī* poses a doubt whether those *mantras* as *Dānastuti* or not. In this connection a narration is referred to in the *Anukramanī*. "Āsaṅga was the son of Plāyoga, who having become a woman afterwards became a man. After he had giving gift to Medhyātithi he praised himself with last four *mantras* beginning with word 'Stuhi'."⁴³ His father was Plāyoga. His wife Śāsvati. Svanadratha is considered as the son of Āsaṅga. But Macdonell and Keith says 'misunderstanding of *Dānastuti* gives him a son Svanadratha, really a mere epithet, and makes him a descendant *Yadu*'.⁴⁴

42. *Rv.* VIII-1-30 to 33

सुहि सुहिदेते घा ते मंहिष्टासो मघोनाम्।
निन्दिताश्वः प्रपथी परमज्या मघस्य मेध्यातिथे ॥ 30 ॥
आ यदश्वान्वनन्वतः श्रद्ध्याहं रथे रुहम्।
उत वामस्य वसुनश्चिकेतति यो अस्ति याद्वः पशुः ॥ 31 ॥
य ऋज्ञा महां मामहे सह त्वचा हिरण्यया।
एष विश्वान्यभ्यस्तु सौभगासङ्गस्य स्वनद्रथः ॥ 32 ॥
अथ प्लायोगिरति दासदन्यानासङ्गे अग्ने दशभिः सहवैः।
अधोक्षणो दश महां रुशन्तो नलाइव सरसो निरतिष्ठन् ॥ 33 ॥

43. प्लायोगिश्चासङ्गे यः स्त्री भूत्वा पुमानभूत् स मेध्यातिथये दानं दत्वा सुहि सुहीति चतसृभिरात्मनि तुष्टव ॥ Anukramanī,

44. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. 1, p.70

Rv. VIII-2-41 and 42

Last two *mantras* in this hymn refer to *Dānastuti*. Here, the seer Medhyātithi praises the gift of Vibhindhu, king of Kāśi. The *Dānastuti mantras* are as below:⁴⁵

“Liberal Vibhindu, you have given to me four times ten thousand, and afterwards eight thousand.

I glorify those two (heaven and earth), the augmenters of water, the originators (of beings), the benefactors of the worshipper, on account of their generation (of the wealth so given to me).”

Rv. VIII-3-21 to 24

The hymn is in the honour of Indra. Medhyātithi is the seer of it. The last four *mantras* of the hymn contain *Dānastuti* of king Pākasthāman, the son of Kuruyāṇa. The gifts are mentioned as below:⁴⁶

“Such wealth as Indra and the Maruts have bestowed upon me, such has Pākasthāman, the son of Kurayāṇa, bestowed, of itself the most magnificent of all, like quick-moving (sun) in the sky.

Pākasthāman has given me a tawny robust beast of burden, the means of acquiring riches.

45. Rv VIII-2-41 and 42

शिष्ठा विभिन्दो अस्मै चत्वार्युता ददत् । अष्टा परः सहस्रा ॥ 41 ॥
उत सु त्ये पयोवृथा माकी रणस्य नस्या । जनित्वनाय मामहे ॥ 42 ॥

46. Rv. VIII-3-21 to 24

यं मे दुरीन्द्रो मरुतः पाकस्थाम कौरयाणः । विश्वेषां त्मना शोभिष्ठमपेव दिवि धावमानम् ॥ 21 ॥
रोहितं मे पाकस्थामा सुधुरं कक्ष्यप्राम् अदाद् रायो विबोधनम् ॥ 22 ॥
यस्मा अन्ये दश प्रति धुरं वहन्ति वह्नयः । अस्तं वयो न तुग्रयम् ॥ 23 ॥
आत्मा पितुस्तनूर्वास ओजोदा अभ्यञ्जनम् ।
तुरीयमिद् रोहितस्य पाकस्थामानं भोजं दातारमब्रवम् ॥ 24 ॥

Whose burden to other bearers (of loads) would he required to convey, such as were the steeds that bore Bhujyu home.

His father's own son, the giver of dwellings, the sustainer of strength like (invigorating) unguents, I celebrate Pākasthāman, the destroyer (of foes), the despoiler (of enemies), the donor of the tawny (horse)."

Rv. VIII-4-19 to 21

The praise made by the seer Devātithi from the Kaṇva family forms this hymn. He praises in the hymn the gods Indra and Pūṣan. The last three *mantras* refer to the gifts of the king Kuraṅga at the 'Dviśti-Yajña.' Kuraṅga may be said to have belonged to the Turvaśa-family, since in these *mantras* clearly mention Turvaśas. The *Dānastuti mantras* are as follows:⁴⁷

"We acknowledge the substantial wealth (of the gift) of hundred horses, the donation made to us amongst men at the holy solemnities of the illustrious and auspicious king Kuraṅga.

I, the seer (Devātithi) have received subsequently the complete donation; the sixty thousand herds of pure cattle merited by the devotions of the pious son of Kaṇva, and by the illustrious Priyamedhas.

On the acceptance of this donation to me, the very trees have exclaimed; (see these seers) have acquired excellent cows, excellent horses."

47. Rv. VIII-4-19 to 21

स्थूरं राधः शताश्वं कुरुद्ग्रस्य दिविष्टिषु ।
राजस्त्वेषस्य सुभगस्व रातिषु तुर्वशेषमन्महि॥ 19 ॥
धीभिः सातानि काणवस्य वाजिनः प्रियमेधैरभिद्युभिः।
षष्ठि सहस्रानु निर्मजामजे निर्यूथानि गवामृषिः॥ 20 ॥
वृक्षाश्चिन्मे अभिपित्वे अरारणुः। गां भजन्त मेहनाऽश्वं भजन्त मेहना ॥ 21 ॥

Rv. VIII-5-37 to 39

In this hymn, seer Brahmātithi of Kaṇva family praises to Aśvins. According to the *Bṛhaddevatā*, it is a *Dānastuti* of King Kaśu.⁴⁸ The concluding three *mantras* refer to *Dānastutis*.⁴⁹

“Become apprised, Aśvins, of my recent gifts, how that the Kaśu, the son of Cedi, has presented me with a hundred camels and ten thousand cows.

The son of Cedi, who has given me for servants ten kings, bright as gold, for all men are beneath his feet; all those around him wear cuirasses of leather.

No one proceeds by that path which the Cedis follow, no other pious man as a mere liberal benefactor conters (favour on those who praise-him).”

Observation :

The seer Brahmātithi received the gifts from the Cedi people and their king Kaśu. In this hymn, he is mentioned with the patronymic Caidya or descendant of Cedi.

48. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-45

द्वादित्याश्विने सूक्ते सप्तत्रिंशत्तमी यथा ।
इत्यर्धर्चो दुचश्वान्त्यः कशोर्दानस्तुतिः स्मृता ॥

49. *Rv. VIII-5-37 to 39*

ता मे अश्विना सनीनां विद्यातं नवानाम् ।
यथा चिच्चैद्यः कशुः शतमुष्ट्रानां ददत् सहस्रा दश गोनाम् ॥ 37 ॥
यो मे हिरण्यसंदुशो दश राज्ञो अमंहत ।
अधस्पदा इच्छैध्यस्य कृष्टयश्चर्मुम्ना अभितो जनाः ॥ 38 ॥
माकिरेना पथा गाद्येनेमे यन्ति चेदयः । अन्यो नेत्सूरिरोहते भूरिदावत्तरो जनः ॥ 39 ॥

Rv.VIII-6-46 to 48

In this hymn, seer Vatsa Kāṇva, praising Indra and last three mantras refer to *Dānastutis*.⁵⁰

"I have accepted from Tirindira, the son of Parśu, hundreds and thousands of the treasures of men.

(These princes) have given to the Chauter, Pajra three hundred horses, ten thousand cattle.

The exalted (prince) has been raised by fame to haven, for he has given camels laiden with four (loads of gold) and Yādava people."

Observation :

In the ninth *mantra* of this hymn, the seer says - "o Indra ! may we obtain the riches consisting of cows and horses."⁵¹ The seer, Vatsa Kāṇva received the gifts from Paraśu and Tirindra. They were associated with the Yadus. In the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*⁵² this statement is represented by a tale that the Kāṇva Vatsa obtained a gift from Tirindra Pārasavya. Here, Tirindra and Paraśu treated as identical.

The opinions of modern scholars in this connection are: "Lundwig sees in the R̄gvedic passage a proof that the Yadus had gained a victory over Tirindra, and gave a part of the booty to the

50. Rv. VIII-6-46 to 48

शतमहं तिरिद्विरे सहस्रं पश्चावा ददे । राधांसि याद्वानाम् ॥ 46 ॥
त्रीणि शतान्यर्वतां सहस्रा दश गोनाम् । दुदुष्प्रज्ञाय साम्ने ॥ 47 ॥
उदानद्वकुहो दिवमुष्टाज्वर्युर्जो ददत् । श्रवसा याद्वां जनम् ॥ 48 ॥

51. Rv. VIII-6-9

प्रतमिन्द्र नशीमही रथ्यं गोमन्तमश्विनाम् ।

52. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*, XVI-11-20

singers; but there is no proof whatever of the correctness of this interpretation, which Zimmer shows to be most unlikely. Yadu princes must be meant by Tirindira and Paraśu, though Weber thinks that the singers were Yadus, not the princes.”⁵³

Rv. VIII-19-36 and 37

In this hymn, seer Sobhari praises to Agni and Ādityas. Here, last two *mantras* refer to *Dānastuti*.⁵⁴

“The magnificent lord, the protector of the virtuous, Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, has given me five hundred brides.

The affluent Śyāva, the lord of the cows, has given to me upon the banks of the Suvāstu a present of three times seventy three (cows).”

Observation :

The seer Sobhari is praising the gift from Trasadasyu the son of Purukutsa, one of the famous kings in the *Rgveda*. The donor Trasadasyu is already mentioned in the thirty-second *mantra* of this hymn.⁵⁵ The last *mantra* refers to the gift from Śyāva belonging to the area covered by bank of the river Suvāstu.

53. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p.310

54. Rv. VIII-19 - 36 to 37

आदान्मे पौरुत्यः पञ्चाशतं त्रसदस्युर्वधूनाम् । मंहिषो अर्यः सत्पतिः ॥ 36 ॥

उत मे प्रयियोर्वयियोः सुवास्त्वा अथि तुग्वनि ।

तिसृणां सप्तीनां श्यावः प्रणेता भुवद्द्विदियानां पतिः ॥ 37 ॥

55. Rv. VIII-19-32

तमागन्म सोभरयः सहस्रमुक्षं स्वभिष्ठिमवसे ।

साम्राजं त्रासदस्यवम् ॥

Rv. VIII-21-17 and 18

The seer of this hymn is Sobhari Kāṇva. This hymn dedicates to Indra. The last two *mantras* of this hymn refer to *Dānastuti*.⁵⁶

"Is it Indra who has given to the donor of the oblation so much affluence ? Is it the auspicious Sarasvatī who has given the treasure? or Citra, is it you.

Verily the king Citra, giving his thousands and ten of thousands, has overspread with his bounty those other petty princes, who rule along the Sarasvatī, as Parjanya (overspreads the earth) with rain."

Observation :

These *mantras* describe the gift from the prince Citra, who lived on the banks of the river Sarasvatī.⁵⁷ There is an allusion to king Citra, mentioned in the first *mantra* of this hymn. The legend in the *Bṛhaddevatā*⁵⁸ attributes this panegyric to Sobhari and describes Citra as king of the rats.

56. Rv. VIII-21-17-18

इन्द्रो वा धेदियन्मधं सरस्वती वा सुभगा ददिर्वसु । त्वं वा चित्र दाशुषे ॥ 17 ॥
चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु ।
पर्जन्य इव ततनद्धि वृष्ट्या सहस्रमयुता ददत् ॥ 18 ॥

57. Sāyaṇa on Rv. VIII-21-17

अत्र चित्रस्य दानं स्तौति । चित्रो नाम राजा सरस्वती तीरे इन्द्रार्थं यागमकृत ।
तत्र मंत्रदृष्टिर्भृथन लाभान्महमेतावदनं को वा प्रायच्छदिति विकल्पयते ॥

58. Bṛhaddevatā, VII-60

असुराजोऽभिमानाच्च प्रहर्षितमनाः स्वयम् ।
संस्तुते देववच्चित्र ऋषये तु गवां ददौ ॥

Rv. VIII-24-28 to 30

Here, seer Viśvāmana Vaiyaśva praises Indra. The last three *mantras* in this hymn contain *Dānastutis*.⁵⁹

"As you, Varu, have distributed vast wealth to those who have solicited (riches) on behalf of Suṣaman, so do you now distribute to the descendants of Vyaśva; and so too you, auspicious food-bestowing Uṣas.

May the gifts of a human price, when offering the Soma libation extend to the Vyaśva and substantial wealth by hundreds and thousand.

If anybody asks of you, (Uṣas), when anywhere present, where the sacrificer Varu dwells, reply the powerful prince, the refuge of all, abides on the banks of the Gomati river."

Observation :

The king Varo Suṣoman is the donor of seer Viśvamana Vaiyāśva. In the twenty-ninth *mantras* of this hymn, another name Nārya is mentioned. Sāyaṇa takes this word to mean 'leader' and opines, that it may be possible that Nārya would be identical with the same Varo-Suṣoman.⁶⁰

Rv.VIII-25-22- to 24

The seer Viśvamana Vaiyāśva praises Mitra-Varuṇa in this hymn. The three *mantras* here present *Dānastuti*.⁶¹

59. Rv. VIII-24-28 to 30

यथा वरो सुषाम्णे सनिध्य आवहो रयिम् । व्यश्वेभ्यः सुभगे वाजिनीवति ॥ 28 ॥
आ नार्यस्य दक्षिणा व्यश्वाँ एतु सोमिनः । स्थूरं च राधः शतवत्सहस्रवत् ॥ 29 ॥
यत्वा पृच्छादीजानः कुहया कुहयाकृते । एषो अपश्रितो वलो गोमतीमव तिष्ठति ॥ 30 ॥

60. Sāyaṇa on Rv. VIII-24-29

61. Rv. VIII-25-22 to 24

ऋब्रमुक्षण्यायने रजतं हरयाणे । रथं युक्तमसनाम सुषामणि ॥ 22 ॥

"We have received from the son of Suṣāman, the descendant of Ukṣan, the overcomer of foes, a well going chariot of silver, yoked with a pair of horses.

Among bay horses these two are pre-eminently the destroyers of foes, and of those eager in combat; the strong bearers men.

Through this new praise of Mitra and Varuṇa, I have obtained at the same moment of the mighty price, two fast-going sagacious, steeds, with whip and reins."

Observation :

This *Dānastuti* describes that seer Viśvamana received the gifts from Ukṣāṇyāyana, Harayāṇa, and Suṣāman. Ukṣāṇyāyana and Harayāṇa, who are referred to as patrons by the side of Suṣoman are different persons. Ludwig thinks that all three are identical.⁶² Sāyaṇa says: "An ancestor of Varu is called Ukṣan whose descendant is Ukṣāṇyāyana. Sāyaṇa even takes Harayāṇa as an adjective of Suṣāman."⁶³

Rv.VIII-46-21 to 24

The hymn praises Indra and Vayu by the seer Vaśa Āśvya. Here, many *mantras* are devoted to the *Dānastuti*. The *Bṛhaddevatā* and *Anukramaṇī* mention that the *mantras* twenty-first to

ता मे अश्वानां हरीणां नितोशना । उतो नु कृत्यानां नृवाहसा ॥ 23 ॥
स्मदभीशु कशावन्ता विप्रा नविष्ट्या मती । महो वाजिनावर्वन्ता सचासनम् ॥ 24 ॥

62. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p.460

63. Sāyaṇa on Rv. VIII-25-22

अक्षनाम कश्चिद्वरोः पूर्वजः । तस्य गोत्रापत्य उक्षणशब्दाण्यः ।
तस्य गोत्रापत्ये हरयाणे शत्रुजीवीतैश्वर्यादिहरणशीलयान एतादुशे सुषामणी ॥

twenty-fourth represent *Dānastuti*.⁶⁴ The *Dānastuti mantras* are as below :⁶⁵

"Let him draw near, who though not a god, would receive this complete living gift - since Vaśa, the son of Aśva, receives it at the drawn of this morning at the hands of Pṛthuśravas, the son of Kāniṭa.

I have received sixty thousand horses, and tens of thousands; a score of hundreds of camels, - a thousand brown mores, - and ten times ten thousand cows with three red paths.

Ten brown horses bear along the wheel of my chariot, of mature igour, of complete power, and the trampling down obstacles.

These are the gifts of the wealthy Pṛthuśravas the son of Kāniṭa; he bestowing a golden chariot, has proved himself most liberal and wise, he has won most abundant fame."

Observation:

Here, the king Pṛthuśravas, the son of Kāniṭa is said to have given the fanciful gifts. The seer of this hymn, Vaśa the son of Aśva is mentioned in the twenty first *mantra*, as receiver of gifts. In this connection *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* refers to the episode.⁶⁶

64. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI 79,80

65. *Rv.* VIII-46-21 to 24

अ स एतु य इवदौं अदेवः पूर्तमाददे।
 यथा चिद्वशो अश्वाः पृथुश्रवसि कानीतेऽस्या व्युष्याददे ॥ 21 ॥
 षष्ठि सहस्राश्वस्यायुतासनमुद्धानां विंशतिं शता।
 दश श्यावीनां शता दश ऋयरूषीणां दश गवां सहस्रा ॥ 22 ॥
 दश श्यावा ऋथद्रयो वीतवारास आशवः। मथा नेमीं नि वावृतुः ॥ 23 ॥
 दानासः प्रथुश्रवसः कानीतस्य सुराधसः।
 रथं हिरण्ययं ददभंहिष्टः सूरिरभूद्विष्टमकृत श्रवः ॥ 24 ॥

66. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*, XVI-11-13

In the thirty-second *mantra*, king Dāsa Balbutha and Tarukṣa are described as a donors of a gift of hundred. They are Dāsa kings. “Roth was inclined to amend the text so as to say that the singer received a hundred Dāsas from Balbutha. Zimmer’s suggestion that he may have been the son of an aborigine mother, or perhaps an aboriginal himself. If this was the case, it would be a clear piece of evidence for the establishment of friendly relations between the Aryans and the Dāsas.”⁶⁷ It may be possible that many Ārya kings and the Dāsas were the associates of the king of Pṛthuśravas.

Rv. VIII-55 and 56

In the Kaṇva *Mandala*, there are two hymns called *Vālakhilya Sūktas* belonging to two different seers viz. Kṛṣṇa and Prasadra of the Kaṇva family. These two hymns are identified as *Dānastuties*.⁶⁸

“We know the works of Indra as various; he is a bull unto the Dasyus, his wealth is coming to us.

As the stars shining in the sky so hundreds of bulls are looking beautiful thus beautifying the heaven with their grandeur.

Praskaṇva gave me one hundred sticks, one hundred dogs, hides, fodder and four hundred cows.

Sons of Kaṇvas, traversing the sky like birds, you are mightily wandering like horses.”

67. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p.64

68. Rv. VIII-55 and 56

भूरिदिन्द्रस्य वीर्यं व्यख्यमभ्यायति । राधस्ते दस्यवे वृक् ॥ 1 ॥
शतं श्वेतास उक्षणो दिवि तारो न रोचन्ते । मह्ना दिवं न तस्तभुः ॥ 2 ॥
शतं वेणूज्ञतं शुनः शतं चर्माणि म्लातानि । शतं में बल्बजस्तुका अरूषीणां चतुश्शतम् ॥ 3 ॥
सुदेवाः स्थ काण्वायना वयोवयो विचरन्तः । अश्वासो न चड्कमत ॥ 4 ॥
आदित्साप्तस्य चर्किरन्नानूनस्य महि श्रवः । श्यावीरतिध्वसन्यथश्वस्तुषा चन संनशे ॥ 5 ॥

Let the seven yolk team be praised. The young lives are of mighty strength. The deep ground makes go galloping baffling the idle fellow.

Rv.VIII-56

"You are a bull to the Dasyus, your inexhaustible wealth has been perceived. Your forces spread to the heaven.

You are a bull to the Dasyus, give me ten thousand from your permanent wealth.

Give me one hundred asses, one hundred worthy sheep and one hundred slaves.

To the Pūtakṛata has been brought mare, well-crested one unlike any in the herd.

Agni who has appeared, is wise and has beautiful chariot and carries sacrifices. He is moving with white and brilliant rays, he is looking irate; he appears in the heaven like Sūrya."

Observation :

According to the *Bṛhaddevatā* and *Anukramaṇī*,⁶⁹ these two hymns consider the *Dānastuti* of Praskaṇva. Here, king Dasyavevṛka is praised. He was son of Pūtakṛatu and his wife Pūtakrata. In one hymn he is called a *Rṣi*. But in two hymns above, he is clearly said as prince victorious over the Dasyus, and a generous patron

Rv. VIII-56

प्रति ते दस्यवेवृक राधो अदश्यहयम् । द्यौर्न प्रथिना शवः ॥ १ ॥
 दश महां पौतक्रतः सहस्रा दस्यवे वृकः । नित्याद्रायो अमंहत ॥ २ ॥
 शतं मे गर्दभानां शतमूर्णावतीनाम् । शतं दासाँ अति स्वजः ॥ ३ ॥
 तत्रो अपि प्राणीयत पूतकृतायै व्यक्ता । अश्वानामिन्न यूथ्याम् ॥ ४ ॥
 अचेत्यग्निश्चिकितुर्हव्यवाद् स समुद्रथः ।
 अग्निः शुक्रेण शोचिषा बृहत्सूरो अरोचत दिवि सूर्यो अरोचत ॥ ५ ॥

69. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI 85-86

of the singer. The name of the Dasyavevṛka (wolf to the dasyu) would indicate that it was a memorable victory over the Dasyus.

Rv. VIII-68-14 to 19

This hymn is in praise of the god Indra. Priyamedha Āngirasa is the seer of this hymn. According to *Bṛhaddevatā*, only fifteen to nineteen *mantras* relate to *Dānastuti*, but fourteenth *mantra* praises the seasons (*ṛtu*). The *Anukramanī* does not mention about the *ṛtus* in this *mantra*, but includes this in the *Dānastutis*. The *Dānastutis* are as under: ⁷⁰

“Six princes come to me in pairs, hearing pleasant gifts, in the exhilaration of the Soma.

I receive two straight going steeds from Indrota, two bay from the son of Rkṣa, two roan from the son of Aśvamedha.

I receive two steeds with excellent chariot from the son of Atithigva, two with excellent reins from the son of Rkṣa, two with excellent ornaments from the son of Aśvamedha.

I have received together with my other gifts six horses with their mores from the pious Indrota, the son of Atithigva.

Among these straight-going steeds are numbered a mature roan more with excellent reins and whip.

70. Rv. VIII-68-14 to 19

उप मा षड् द्वाष्टा नरः सोमस्य हर्ष्या । तिष्ठन्ति स्वादुरातयः ॥ 14 ॥
 ऋज्ञाविन्द्रोत आ ददे हर्षी ऋक्षस्य सूनवि । आश्वमेधस्य रोहिता ॥ 15 ॥
 सुरथाँ आतिथिग्वे स्वभीशूराक्षेँ । आश्वमेधे सुपेशसः ॥ 16 ॥
 षष्ठ्यक्षाँ आतिथिग्व इन्द्रोते वधूमतः । सचा पूत्रकतौ सनम् ॥ 17 ॥
 ऐषु चेतद्वृष्णवत्यन्तऋज्ञेष्वरुषी । स्वभीशुः कशावती ॥ 18 ॥
 न युष्मे वाजबन्धवो निनित्सुश्वन मर्त्यः । अवद्यमधि दीधरत् ॥ 19 ॥

O princes, givers of food, even the lover of calumny has thrown no censure on you."

Observation :

Priyamedha of the Āngirasa family is said to have received gifts from king Ṛkṣa and his son Aśvamedha, and as also from king Atithigva and his son Indrota. We have not much information about these patrons in the *Rgveda*.

Rv. VIII-70-13 to 15

This hymn is in praise of Indra by Puruhanma of Āngirasa family. Here, it is said, Śara the son of Śūradeva gave as a gift of only a calf to the 'three seers' This *Dānastuti* ironically mentioned in the *Rgveda* is as below:⁷¹

"He who directs towards the worshipper his well-yoked prancing steeds,-he (Indra), the swift bearer of blessing, (produces) rain, - he, who being comparable only to himself is delivered from all his enemies.

Śakra verily overpowers; Indra, over powers all his enemies; he worthy of love, abiding beyond, cleaves the cloud smitten by his thunder-voice.

Indra, like a young boy, has mounted his splendid chariot; he makes ready for his father and mother the great deer-like many functioned cloud."

71. Rv. VIII-70-13 to 15

सखायः कृतुमिच्छत कथा राधाम शरस्य । उपसुतिं भोजः सूरियो अहयः॥ 13॥
भूरिभिः समह ऋषिभिर्बहिष्मद्दिः स्तविष्यसे । यदित्थमेकमेकमिच्छर वत्सान्पराददः॥ 14॥
कर्णगृह्य मधवा शौरदेव्यो वत्सं नस्त्रिभ्य आनयत् । अजां सूरिन् धातवे॥ 15॥

Rv. VIII-74-13 to 15

This hymn is in praise of Agni. Gopavana is seer of this hymn. The *Anukramaṇī* takes these *mantras* as *Dānastutis*, but the *Bṛhaddevatā*⁷² considers only thirteen and fourteen *mantras* as *Dānastutis*. Those *mantras* are as below:⁷³

“Summoned before, Śrutarvan, the son of Rkṣa, the number of the pride of his enemies, I stroke with my hand the heads of the four horses which he has given to me, as men stroke the long wool of rams.

Four swift horses of that most mighty king, yoked to a splendid car, bear me forth to seize the substance of my enemies, as ships bore home the son of Tugra.

Verily I address you, O great river Paruṣṇī, ; O waters, there is no mortal who gives horses more liberally than this most mighty monarch.”

Observation :

In this hymn, king Śrutarvan is referred to in the fourth *mantra*. Gopavana of the Atri family is referred to as receiver of a gift from king Śrutarvan, the son of Rkṣa. He lived on the banks of Paruṣṇī. He is concerned with his war over Mṛgya.

72. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-95

आत्मनमात्मना स्तुत्वा स्तौति दानं श्रुतर्वणः ॥

73. Rv. VIII-74-13 to 15

अहं हुवान आर्के श्रुतपर्वणि मदच्युति । शर्धासीव स्तुकाविनां मृक्षा शीर्षा चतुर्णाम् ॥ 13 ॥

मां चत्वार आशवः शविष्टस्य द्रविलवः । सुराथासो अभि प्रयो वक्षन्वयो न तुग्रम् ॥ 14 ॥

सत्यमित्वा महेनदि परुष्यव देदिशम् । नेमापो अश्वदातारः शविष्टादस्ति मर्त्यः ॥ 15 ॥

Rv. X-33-4 and 5

This hymn uttered by seer Kavaśa. The fourth and fifth *mantras* contain a *Dānastuti* of Kuruśravaṇa, who is said to be giving gifts in thousands. He is son of Upamaśravas, and his father Mitrātithi.⁷⁴

He is alluded to as dead in this hymn. In another hymn he is mentioned as still alive. His name connects on the one hand with the Kurus, and on the other with Trasadasyu and the Purus.

"I, the *Rsi*, solicit wealth of the munificent prince Kuruśravaṇa, the son of Trasadasyu, for the priests.

Whose three horses bear me pleasantly in the chariot; I praise him at the ceremony in which he presents thousands."

In this manner the *Dānastuti* hymns in the *Rgveda* refer to the names of the kings, their clans, the details of their gifts, the names of the seers who received the gifts therefrom etc; therefore these hymns have been recognised as *Dānastutis*. Reading between the lines of these hymns, gives an understanding that the act of giving gifts was considered as a pious and beneficial act of R̄gvedic people. This practice has been continued through ages among the traditionals upto today.

74. *Rv. X-33-4 and 5*

कुरुश्रवणमावृणी राजानं त्रासदस्यवम् । मंहिष्ठं वाघतामृषिः ॥ 4 ॥
यस्य मा हरितो रथे तिस्रो वहन्ति साधुया । स्तवै सहस्रदक्षिणे ॥ 5 ॥

List of Dānastutis

R̄gvedic mantras	The Bṛhaddevatā of Śaunaka	Anukramanīs	Seer of the Dānastutis	Royal Donor	Daksinās (gifts)
I-100-16,17	-	-	-	-	-
I-122-7 to 15	-	-	-	-	-
I-125	III-140	I-125	Kakṣivān	Syanaya Bhāvayavya	Hundred dark-brown horses, fort, red horses, ten chariots, a heard, one thousand sixty cows.
I-126	-	-	Kakṣivān	-	Two horses.
IV-15-7 to 10	-	-	Vāmadeva Goutama	Somaka Sāhadeva	Ten Jars with gold, two marts.
IV-32-19 to 24	-	-	Vāmadeva Goutama	-	Fifty horses
V-18-5	-	-	Dvita Mirkavāha Ātreya	-	Two cows, carts, two cloths etc.
V-27	-	-	-	Trayāruna Āśvamedha	Hundred bulls
V-30-12 to 15	-	-	Babru Ātreya	Rnāncaya	Four thousand cows
V-33-7 to 10	-	-	Sainivaruna	Trasadasyu	Ten horses
V-34-9	-	-	-	Vidatha	Thousands of treasure
V-36-6	-	-	Sainivaruna	Satri	Thousands of gifts ?
V-52-17	-	-	Prabhūvāsu	Śrutarathā	Two horses, three hundred cattle.
V-61-5 to 10	-	-	Śyāvāśva Ātreya	-	Hundred cows
VI-27-8	V-14 I(B)	VI-27-8	Syāvāśva Ātreya	Taranta Purumiḥa	Horses, cattle, hundred sheeps, hundred cows.
V-45-31 to 33	-	-	Bhāradvāja	Abhyāvarti Cāyamāna	Two horses with chariot twenty cows.
VI-47-22 to 25	-	VI-47-22 to 25	Śāmyu Bārtṣptya	Bṛustakṣā	Thousands cows
VI-63-9 to 10	-	-	Garga Bhāradvāja	Prastoka Divodāsa	Ten jars of gold, ten horses
			Bhāradvāja	Puraya Sumilha Sānda Purupantha	Two mares Hundred cows Horses, ten cows Hundred thousand horses

VII-18 - 21 to 25	V-162 (b)-163(a)	VII-18-22 to 25	Vasiṣṭha	Sudāśa	Two hundred cows, two chariot, women, four horses.
VIII-1-30 to 33	VI-41(b)	VIII-1-30 to 33	Medhyātīthi, Pragāthi, etc.	Svanadratha Asaṅga	Two horses Ten thousand cows
VIII-2-41, 42	VI-42	VIII-2-41,42	Medhyātīthi	Vibhīndhu	Forty eight thousand cows
VIII-3-21 to 24	VI-42	VIII-3-21 to 24	Medhyātīthi	Pākasthaman	Ten horses
VIII-4-19 to 24	VI-44	VIII-4-19 to 21	Devātīthi Kāṇva	Kurāṅga	Hundred horses, sixty thousand cows.
VIII-5-37 to 39	VI-45	VIII-5-37 to 39	Brahmatīthi Kāṇva	Kāśu Caidya	Hundred Camels, Thousand cows
VIII-6-46 to 48	VI-47 (ab)	VIII-6-46 to 48	Vatsa Kāṇva	Tirīṇdira Pariśu Yādavas Pajra Sāman	Hundred cows, Thousand cows, Pious gifts, Three hundred horses, Thousand cows
VIII-19-36, 37	-	VIII-19-36, 37	Sobhari Kāṇva	Trasadasyu Śyāva	Five hundred brides Three times seventy three cows Thousands (of gifts)
VIII-21-17, 18	VI-59 (cd), 62 (c)	VIII-21-17, 18	Sobhari Kāṇva	Citra	Hundreds & thousands (of wealth)
VIII-24-28 to 30	-	-	Viśvamana Vaiyāśva	Varu	White horse White horse Chariot of silver Yoked chariot, reins, whip
VIII-25-22 to 24	VI-66	-	Viśvamana Vaiyāśva	Uksaṇyāyana Harayāna Suṣāman	Thousands cows, horse, chariot
VIII-34-16 to 18	-	-	Vasuocī Viśvamana	-	
VIII-46-21 to 33	VI-79, 80	VIII-46-21 to 28	Vaiyāśvasa Āṅgirasa	Pṛthuśravas	Sixty thousand horses, and hundreds of camels, thousands brown mares, ten times, ten thousand cows etc. Sixty thousand horses, hundred camels, thousand cows
			Vāśa Aśvya	Śvitna	Hundred cows
				Dāsa Bālbūta Taruṣa	

VIII-55	VI-85, 86	VIII-55- 1 to 4	Kṛāśa Kāṇva	Dasyaveṇīka	Hundred bulls, hundred dogs, hundred sheeps, four hundred red cows, a dark brown mare,
VIII-56	-	VIII-56- 1 to 4	Prasādhra Kāṇva	Dasyaveṇīka	Thousands cows, hundred asses, hundred wooly sheeps etc.
VIII-65-10 to 12	-	-	Pragātha Kāṇva	The grand son of Durgaha (?)	Thousands cows
VIII-68-14 to 19	VI-92	VIII-68-14 to 19	Priyamedha Āṅgirasa	Indrota	Two white horses, chariots, six horses etc.
VIII-70-13 to 15	-	-	Puruhannīma	Sara	A Calf
VIII-74-13 to 15	VI-95 (b)	VIII-74-13 to 15	Gopavana	Srīvarvān	Four horses
X-33-4, 5	-	X-33-4, 5	Kavaṣa	Kuruśravāna	Three horses, chariot, thousands of (gifts)
X-62-8 to 11	-	X-62-8 to 11	Nābhānēdiāṣṭa	Yadu, Turvṣā	Large number of cows , Two servants
X-93-14, 15	VIII-147	-	Tānva Pārthyā	Duhṣṭima, Prthvāna Venā Rāma	Five hundred cows Seventy seven cows

6. R̄gvedic Ākhyānas

The ākhyānas in the Vedas are the foundation for a history of human values. The *Nirukta* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* trace *itihāsa* and ākhyāna to the *R̄gveda*. They explain some R̄gvedic hymns to be mixtures of *mantra*, *gāthā*; *itihasa*, while three hymns at least are described as *itihāsa-sūktas*. *Itihāsa* as a work of historical nature is mentioned by *Atharvaveda* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, where it means ancient event (*Pūrāvṛtta*). The *Nirukta* and *Bṛhaddevatā* refer to *itihāsa* in this sense. *Itihāsa* is usually coupled with *Purāṇa* which means ancient lore. The *Atharvaveda*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *Taittiriya Araṇyaka*, the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad*, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* and the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* mention *itihāsa-purāṇa* immediately after the four Vedas and sometimes, *itihāsa* is glorified with the title of Veda. Again, the house-holder's list of works for daily recitation includes *itihāsa-Purāṇa*. During the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, the *itihāsa-purāṇas* were to be recited on the eighth and ninth days of the ten-day cycle of recurring revolving narration of ākhyānas.

Many ākhyānas of war between gods and demons are found in the Brahmana literature. Ten ākhyānas were to be repeated in a cycle throughout the year when the sacrificial horse roamed at large. The *Brāhmaṇa* literature as well as the *Nirukta* mention the existence of literary men who specialised in ākhyāna literature. Though ākhyāna was distinguished from *itihāsa* by both *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Nirukta*, it was gradually assimilated in the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition. Indeed, the *gāthās*, *nārāśamśis*, and ākhyānas together strengthened the *itihāsa-purāṇa* traditions.

Ākhyānas or narratives developed out of the material to be found in the R̄gvedic hymns. The *ākhyāna* of Śunaśśepa and Purūravas can be traced to the R̄gvedic hymns or to some ancient tradition reflected in these hymns. These hymns, by their dramatic quality, indicate the existence of semi-dramatic and semi-epic *ākhyāna* literature out of which grew the later historical epics and dramas.

Śaunaka's *Bṛhaddevatā* is a land-mark in the study of the *ākhyānas* as it is the most ancient text to narrate, briefly of course, as many as forty *ākhyānas*, which are amplifications of the R̄gvedic nucleus. *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana offers similar material; Śadguruśiṣya expands many of the *ākhyānas*. Finally, Sāyaṇa's prefatory notes to the hymns referring to past stories are very helpful.

i. Śunaśśepa Ākhyāna : A Socio-historical study

Śunaśśepa is one of the famous seers who has visioned eight hymns in the *R̄gveda*. The hymns I.24-30 and IX-3, form a collection of 107 *mantras*, with in which he has propitiated different gods such as Agni, Savitṛ, Varuṇa, Viśvedevas, Indra, Aśvins, Uṣas and Soma-Pavamāna. Among the R̄gvedic *ākhyānas* the Śunaśśepa *ākhyāna* occupies an important place. It has been considered as the earliest specimen of story narration in the literature of the world. This *ākhyāna* is important from the point of view of the controversy about the prevalence of the human-sacrifice in ancient India. Various scholars have studied this *ākhyāna* in the socio-historical perspective.

H.L. Hariyappa,¹ has very ably discussed the propriety of the name Śunaśśepa. After analysing various grammatical and linguistical

1. H.L. Hariyappa, *R̄gvedic Legends through the Ages*, Deccan College, Poona, 1953, pp.230-238

facts, he prefers the form 'Śunaśśepa' (pillar of happiness) to 'Śunahśśepa' (the dog tailed one). He has concluded very reasonably that the orthography of the word 'Śunaśśepa' requires proper appreciation. Śunaśśepa is the correct form, whereas 'Śunahśśepa' is wrong, unscientific and pretentious.

Some forty-four R̄gvedic *mantras*, attributed to Śunaśśepa, may be traced in the *Sāmaveda Samhitā*.² These are uttered in various occasions during the performance of sacrifices. Besides this, twenty *mantras* of the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*,³ and the Atharvaveda⁴ have been ascribed to his seership.

The seed of the Śunaśśepa ākhyāna in the *R̄gveda*, appears in the large form in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*. Still further, the epics and the *Purāṇas* have described this legend with interesting additions. This fact however speaks of its development of ideas through the ages.

In the R̄gvedic *mantras*, the name of Śunaśśepa has been mentioned three times.⁵ Of these *mantras*, the two *mantras* in the twenty forth hymn of the first *Mandala*, is attributed to Śunaśśepa. And the second hymn of the fifth *mandala*, is attributed to the seer Kumāra Ātreya. These three *mantras* are as below:

"This (your praise) is what they have told me at night, this in the day-time; this knowledge speaks to my heart; may that king Varuṇa whom Śunaśśepa, invoked when fettered liberate us"⁶

2. *Sāmaveda Samhitā*, 15, 17, 28, 154, 163, 183, 214, 589 etc.

3. *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*, VIII-23-29; X-27, 28; XII-12; XVIII-49-55; XXI-1, 2 and XXXV-11

4. *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, VI-25; VII-88; XX-26-1-3; XX-45, 74, 122

5. *Rv.* I-24-12, 13; V-2-7

6. तदिन्नक्तं तद्विवा मह्यमाहुस्तदयं केतो हृद आ वि चष्टे।

शुनश्शेपो यमहृभीतः सो अस्मात्राजा वरुणो मुमोक्तु ॥ *Rv.* I-24- 12



"You have liberated Sunas̄epa from a thousand stakes, for he was patient in endurance; so Agni, free us from our bonds, having sat down here (at our sacrifice), intelligent offerer of oblations."⁷

"You have liberated fettered Šunaś̄epa from a thousand stakes, for he was patient in endurance; so, Agni, free us from our bonds, having sat down here (at our sacrifice), intelligent offerer of oblations"⁸

The two *mantras* mentioned above indicate that Varuṇa liberated Šunaś̄epa from three stakes. Here, the seer prays Varuṇa hoping liberations from the fetters as in the case of Šunaś̄epa.

In this connection, Hariyappa⁹ doubts his seership of these two *mantras*. He opines that these *mantras* are difficult to hold that Šunaś̄epa is the seer thereof. Because, in the first *mantra*, the worshipper prays, "May Varuṇa the king, to whom Šunaś̄epa addressed himself, liberate us"; that is, on the precedent of Šunaś̄epa's being saved by Varuṇa a later devotee is seeking a similar favour. The second *mantra* says. "Šunaś̄epa in fetters prays to god Varuṇa; may Varuṇa set him free and may he remove the fatters." This situation, in the view of Hariyappa, must have been that while Šunaś̄epa is praying the god for succur, those by the side are recommending him for Varuṇa's mercy. This is itself reasonable, but is inconsistent with the former *mantra*. The legend

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7. शुनशेपोद्यहृभीतस्त्रिष्वादित्यं दुपदेषु बद्धः।
अवैनं राजा वरुणः ससुज्याद्विद्वां अदब्धो वि मुमोक्तु पाशान्॥ *Rv. I-24- 13*
 8. शुनश्चिच्छेपं निदितं साहस्राद्युपादमुज्चो अशमिष्ट हि षः।
एवास्मदने वि मुमुग्धि पाशान्होतश्चिकित्व इह तू निषद्य॥ *Rv. V-2- 7*
 9. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, pp-184-185

depicts that these *mantras* were uttered by Śunaśśepa in order to obtain release, whereas the two *mantras*, above regard the release as a thing of the past. On this basis, he infers in two ways: (a) these are not Śunaśśepa hymns at all (*Rv.I-24* to 30). At the *Samhitā* stage, these hymns were assembled and occurrence of Śunaśśepa name in two *mantras* was responsible for the ascription. Or, (b) the two *mantras* in question are a later insertion or interpolation into the Śunaśśepa hymns.

In another *mantra* (*Rv. V-2-7*), the seer Kumāra Ātreya recorded the event of Śunaśśepa in clear terms. "You did liberate the first fettered Śunaśśepa from a thousand fold stake and he became pacified, indeed."¹⁰ Here, Agni delivered Śunaśśepa from the stake, because Agni is the deity of this *mantra*.

In the *Rgveda* other few *mantras* are indirectly related to the Śunaśśepa ākhyāna. In the twenty fourth hymn of the first *mandala*, the first two *mantras* clearly show the propriety of Śunaśśepa ākhyāna. These two *mantras* are as under:

"Of many immortal gods whose good name should we contemplate? who will deliver us back to the vast earth that I may again behold my father and mother ?"¹¹

"Of many immortal gods, we shall contemplate the Agni's name first; he will deliver us back to this vast earth that I may again behold my father and mother."¹²

10. शुनश्चिक्षेपं निदितं साहस्राद्यूपादमुज्ज्वो अशमिष्ट हि षः। *Rv. V-2- 7*

11. कस्य नूनं कतमस्यामृतानां मनामहे चारु देवस्य नाम।

कोनो महा अदितये पुनर्दर्त्यितरं च दृशेयं मातरं च ॥ *Rv. I-24-1*

12. अग्नेर्वयं प्रथमस्यामृतानां मनामहे चारु देवस्य नाम ।

स नो महा अदितये पुनर्दर्त्यितरं च दृशेयं मातरं च ॥ *Rv. I-24-2*

The first *mantra* mentioned above is described, Śunaśśepa bound on the stakes and calling for the help of some gods by whose grace he can see his father and mother. In the second *mantra*, he suddenly thinks that only god Agni should be praised for well-being and by his (Agni's) mercy he would be able to see his parents. It is natural that in a miserable condition, he wants to see his parents.

It is an interesting thing to note here that Śunaśśepa was the creation of Viśvāmitra and this bears great historical importance. The *Sarvānukramani*¹³ and the *Vedārtha Dipika*,¹⁴ mentions Śunaśśepa as the son of Ajigarta. Actually he was the middle among the three sons of Ajigarta. The remaining two sons are Śunahpucca and Śunolāngūla. Here is mentioned another name of Śunaśśepa, that is *Devarāta* (given by the gods); he was adopted son of Viśvāmitra. Because, he was given to Viśvāmitra by gods. So his name was called Devarāta. In this connection Hariyappa¹⁵ notes that the name of Śunaśśepa, the god-given (*Devarāta*) son and heir to Viśvāmitra, is nowhere (*Rv.I-24-1,2*), even indirectly, mentioned in the second and sixtieth hymns of the *Viśvāmitra maṇḍala*. And this episode is not mentioned in the *Vasiṣṭha maṇḍala* too. According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,¹⁶ Vasiṣṭha was officiated as the *Brahmā* priest in the Śunaśśepa's sacrifice (and deliverance). But, however this episode is reflected in the hymn of a member of

13. अजीगर्त पुत्रो जन्मना शुनश्शेपो नाम.....

दत्तपुत्राय विश्वामित्रपुत्रो देवरातो नाम। Kātyayana, *Sarvānukramani*.

14. देवै रातो दत्तःस देवरात इति। Saḍguruśiṣya, *Vedārtha Dipika*

15. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends through the Ages*, p-187

16. तस्य ह विश्वामित्रो होतास्सीति जमदग्नीरद्युर्युवसिष्ठो ब्रह्मा। Aitareya Brāhmaṇa

विश्वामित्रोऽभवत् तस्मिन् होताचाध्वर्युरात्मवान्।

जमदग्नीरभूद् ब्रह्मा वसिष्ठोऽयास्यामगः॥ cf. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, IX-7-21

the Atri family, who is no connected with this affair. Undoubtedly, the seer Kumāra Ātreya describes the current episodes in his family circle.

There is, ofcourse, Śunaśśepa appeal to Varuṇa as mentioned in the *Rgveda mantras*, I-24-12 and 13, for freedom from the bonds, of Varuṇa's capture. Again, the following two *mantras* say that Śunaśśepa was released from the fetters of Varuṇa:

"Loosen up, Varuṇa, the upper bond from us, loosen down the lower bond, and loosen the middle bond, that we may then O Āditya (Son of Aditi or Varuṇa) be free from sin in your worship."¹⁷

"Remove our upper bonds, untie the centre and the lower bonds that may live"¹⁸

It may be noted that two *mantras* of the *Rgveda* (I-24-1 and 3) are in the light of the 'Pararkṣata-gāthā' or the 'Śunaśśepākhyāna' which is elaborately related in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.¹⁹

*Tattiriya Saṁhitā*²⁰ mentions that Śunaśśepa was seized by Varuṇa. Śunaśśepa prays Varuṇa with the *mantra* of 'Uduttamam,'

"Varuṇa seized Śunaśśepa Ajigarti, he saw this *mantra* addressed to Varuṇa, by it, he freed himself from the noose of

17. उदुत्तमं वरुण पाशमस्मदवाधमं वि मध्यमं प्रथाय ।

अथा वयमादित्य व्रते त्वानागसो अदितये स्याम ॥ *Rv.* I-24-15

18. उदुत्तमं मुमुग्धि नो वि पाशं मध्यमं चृत । अवाधमानि जीवसे ॥ *Rv.* I-25-21

19. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, p-186

20. शुनश्शेपं आजिगार्तीं वरुणो गृह्णात् स एताम् वरुणीं अपस्यत् तया वै स आत्मानं वरुणपाशाद् अमुज्ज्वत् वरुणो वा एतं गृह्णाति य उखां प्रतिमुज्ज्वत उदुत्तममं वरुण पाशम् अस्माद् इत्याहात्मानं एवैतया ॥ *Taittariya Saṁhitā*, V-2,1,3

Varuṇa; Varuṇa seized him who takes the fire-pan, 'From us the highest knot, O Varuṇa' noose.²¹

The *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*²² also alludes to the same story which is referred in the *Taittirīya Samhitā*, with some difference. The *Kapiṣṭala-Kāṭha Samhitā*²³ too mentions to the Śunaśsepa-ākhyāna, exactly in the same manner, as read in the *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*.

The *Atharvaveda Samhitā* does not record the Śunaśsepa-ākhyāna. Śunaśsepa is only the seer of some hymns, viz. VI-25; VII-83. In the *Atharvaveda*, VII-88th hymn is addressed to Varuṇa. Here, the Ṛgvedic mantra 'Uduttamam' .. (*Rv.I-24-15*), is repeated as the third mantra of this hymn.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*²⁴ gives in detail, the story of Śunaśsepa's deliverance. Other *Brāhmaṇa* texts do not mention any reference to Śunaśsepa. The *Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,²⁵ repeats this story, as found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* with a few changes. The summary of the Śunaśsepa episode as found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII.13-18, as follows:

हरिश्वन्द्रो ह वैधसा ऐक्षवाको राजा अपुत्र आस । तस्य शतं जाया बभूवुस्तासु पुत्रं न लेभे ।
तस्य ह पर्वतनारदौ गृह ऊष्टुः । स ह नारदं पप्रच्छ -
यन्निविदंपुत्रमिच्छन्ति ये विजानन्ति ये च न ।
किंस्वित्युत्रेण विन्दते तन्म आचक्षव नारद ॥ इति ।

21. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends through the Ages*, p-190

22. उदुत्तम वरुण पाशम् अस्माद् इति शुनश्शेपो व एताम् आजिगर्तिर्वरुणगृहीतो पश्यत् तथा वै स वरुण पाशाद् अमुञ्यत वरुणपाशम् एवैतया प्रमुञ्चते ॥ *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*, XIX -11

23. *Kapiṣṭala Kāṭha Samhitā*, XXI-1

24. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII-13 to 18

25. *Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XV-17-27

स एकया पृष्ठो दशभिः प्रत्युवाच -
 ऋणमस्मिन्संनयत्यमृतत्वं च गच्छति ।
 पिता पुत्रस्य जातस्य पश्येच्चेजीवतो मुखम् ॥1॥
 यावन्तः पृथिव्यां भोगा यावन्तो जातवेदसी ।
 यावन्तो अप्सु प्राणिनां भूयान्पुत्रो पितुस्ततः ॥2॥
 अन्नं ह प्राणाः शरणं ह वासो रूपं हिरण्यं पशवो विवाहाः ।
 सखा ह जाया कृपणं ह दुहिता ज्योतिर्हि पुत्रः परमे व्योमन् ॥3॥
 नापुत्रस्य लोकोऽस्तीति बत्सर्वे पशवो विदुः ।
 तस्मात्पुत्रो मातरं स्वसारं चाधिरोहति ॥4॥

अथैनमुवाच वरुणं राजानमुपधाव पुत्रो मे जायतां तेन त्वा यजा ।इति । तथेति । स वरुणं राजानमुपसार पुत्रो मे जायता तेन त्वा यजा ।इति । तथेति । तस्य पुत्रो जज्ञे रोहितो नाम । तं होवाचाजनि वै ते पुत्रो यजस्व मा अनेनेति । स होवाच यदा वै पशुर्निर्दशो भवत्यथ स मेध्यो भवति निर्दिशोन्वस्त्वथ त्वा यजा इति तथेति ।

स ह निर्दश आस तं होवाच निर्दशोन्यभूद्यजस्व मा अनेनेति । स होवाच यदा वै पशोर्दन्ता जायन्तो अथ मोध्यो भवति । दन्तान्वस्य जायन्तामथ त्वा यजा इति । तथेति । स ह संनाहं प्रापत्तं होवाच संनाहं नु प्रप्रोद्यजस्व मा अनेनेति । स तथेत्युक्त्वा पुत्रमामंत्रयामास ततायं वै महां त्वामददाहत्त त्वयाहमिमं यजा इति । स ह नेत्युक्त्वा धनुरादायारण्यमुपातस्थौ स संवत्सरमरण्ये चचार । अथ हैक्ष्वाकं वरुणो जग्राह तस्य होदरं जज्ञे तदु ह रोहितः शुश्राव सो अरण्याद्ग्राममेयाय तदिन्द्रः पुरुषरूपेण पर्येत्योवाच । चरैवेति । तृतीयं संवत्सरमरण्ये चचार सो अरण्याद्ग्राममेयाय तदिन्द्रः पुरुषरूपेण पर्येत्योवाच । आस्ते भग आसीनस्योर्ध्वस्तिष्ठति तिष्ठतः ।

शेते निपद्यमानस्य चराति चरतो भगः । । चरैव इति । चरैवेति वै मा ब्राह्मणोऽवोचदिति ह षष्ठं संवत्सरमरण्ये चचार । सोऽजीगर्त्त सौयवसिमृषिमशनया परीतमरण्य उपेयाय । तस्य ह त्रयः पुत्रा आसुः शुनश्चुच्छः शुनश्चेषः शुनोलाङ्गूल इति । तं होवाच-ऋषेऽहं ते शतं ददाम्यहमेषामेकेनाऽत्मानं निष्क्रीणा, इति । स ज्येष्ठं पुत्रं निगृह्णान उवाच- न न्विवमिति । न एवमिति कनिष्ठं माता । तौ ह मध्ये संपादयाज्चक्रतुः शुनश्चेषे । तस्य ह शतं दत्वा स तमादाय सोऽरण्याद्ग्राममेयाय । स पितरमेत्योवाच - तत, हन्ताहमनेनाऽत्मानं निष्क्रीणा इति । स वरुणं राजानमुपसारानेन त्वा यजा इति । तथेति, भूयान्वै ब्राह्मणः क्षत्रियादिति वरुण उवाच । तस्मा एतं राजसूयं यज्ञक्रतुं प्रोवाच । तमेतमभिषेचनीये पुरुषं पशुमालेभे । ।

तस्य ह विश्वामित्रो होताॽऽसीजमदग्निरध्वर्युवसिष्ठो ब्रह्माऽयास्य उद्गता । तस्मा उपाकृताय नियोक्तारं न विविदुः । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौव्यवसिर्मह्यमपरं शतंदत्ताहमेनंनियोक्ष्यामीति । तस्मा अपरं शतं दद्वुः । स होवाचाजिगर्तः सौयवसिर्मह्यमपरं शतं दत्ताहमेनं विशसिष्यामिति । तस्मा अपरं शतं दद्वुः । सोऽसिं निश्चान एऽयाय । अथ ह शुनशेप ईक्षाज्यक्रेऽमानुषमिव वै मा विशसिष्यन्ति । हन्ताहं देवता उपधावामीति । स प्रजापतिमेव प्रथमं देवतानामुपससार, कस्यनूनं कत्मस्यामृतानमित्येतयर्च । तं प्रजापतिरुवाचाग्निवै देवानां नेदिष्टस्तमेवोपधावेति । सोऽग्निमुपससार, अग्नेर्वयं प्रथमस्यामृतानामित्येतयर्च । तमग्निरुवाच सविता वै प्रसवानामीशे तमेवोपधावेति । स सवितारमुपससार, अभित्वदेव सवितररित्येतेनतृचेन । तं सवितोवाच वरुणाय वै राज्ञो नियुक्तोऽसि, तमेवोपधावेति । स वरुणं राजानमुपससारात उत्तराभिरेकत्रिंशता । तं वरुण उवाचाग्निवैदेवानां मुखं सुहृदयतमस्तं नु सुहृथ त्वोत्त्वक्ष्याम इति । सोऽग्निं तुष्टावात उत्तराभिद्वाविंशत्या । तमग्निरुवाच विश्वान्नु देवान्तुहृथ त्वोत्त्वक्ष्याम इति । स विश्वादेवांस्तुष्टाव, नमो महद्भ्ये नमो अभकेभ्यः इत्येनयर्च ।

तं विश्वेदेवा ऊचुरिन्द्रो वै देवानामोजिष्ठो बलिष्ठः सहिष्ठः सत्तमः पारियिष्णुतमस्तं नु सुहृथ त्वोत्त्वक्ष्याम इति । स इन्द्रं तुष्टाव, यच्चिद्धि सत्य सोमपा इति चैतेन सूक्तेनोत्तरस्य च पञ्चदशभिः । तस्मा इन्द्रः स्तूयमानः प्रीतो मनसा हिरण्यरथं ददौ तमेतया प्रतीयाय, शश्वदिन्द्र इति ।

तमिन्दु उवाचाश्विनौसुहृथत्वोत्त्वक्ष्याम इति । सोऽश्विनौ तुष्टावात उत्तरेण तृचेन । तमश्विना ऊवतुरुषसं नु सुहृथत्वोत्त्वक्ष्याम इति । स उषसं तुष्टावत उत्तरेण तृचेन । तस्य स्मर्युक्तायां वि पाशो मुमुचे कनीय ऐक्षवाकस्योदरं भवत्युत्तमस्यामेवच्युक्तायां, वि पाशो मुमुचेऽगद ऐक्षवाक आस ॥। शुनशेपो अज्जसवं ददर्श । अथ ह शुनशेपो विश्वामित्रस्यांकमाससाद । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौयवसी ऋषे पुनर्मे पुत्रं देहीति । नेति होवाच । विश्वामित्रो देवा वा इमं मह्यमरासतेति स ह देवरातो वैश्वामित्र आस तस्येते कपिलेय बाघ्रवः । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौयवसी त्वं वेहि विह्वयाहा इति । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौयवसीराङ्गिरसो जन्मनाऽस्याजीगर्तिः श्रुतः कविः । ऋषे पैतामहत्तत्तोर्माऽपगाः पुनरेहि मामिति । स होवाच शुनशेपोऽदर्शु स्त्वा शासहस्तं न यच्छूद्रेष्टलप्सत । गवां त्रीणि शतानि त्वमावृणीथा मदङ्गीर इति । असंधेयमिति ह विश्वामित्र अपससाद स होवाच विश्वामित्रो भीम एव सयवसीः शासेन विशिशासिषुः । अस्थान्मैतस्य पुत्रो भूर्मैवोपेहि पुत्रतामिति । स होवाच विश्वामित्रो ज्येष्ठो मे त्वं पुत्राणां स्यात् स्तव श्रेष्ठा प्रजा स्यात् । उपेया दैवं मे दायं तेन वै त्वोपमन्त्रया

इति । विश्वामित्रः पुत्रानामन्त्रयामास मधुच्छन्दाः शृणोतन ऋषभो रेणुकष्टकः । ये के च भ्रातरः स्थ नास्मै ज्येष्ठाय कल्पद्विमिति ।

तस्यः ह विश्वामित्रस्यैक शतं पुत्रा आसुः । पञ्चाशदेव ज्यायांसो मधुच्छन्दसः पञ्चाशत्कनीयसः । तद् जायांसो न ते कुशलं मेनिरे । ताननु व्याजहारन्तान्वः प्रजा भक्षिष्ठेति त एतेऽन्नाः पुण्ड्रा शबर पुलिन्दा मूतिबा इत्युदन्त्या बहवो वैश्वामित्रा दस्यूनां भूयिष्ठाः । स होवाच मधुच्छन्दाः पञ्चशता सार्धं यन्नः पिता संजानीते तस्मिस्तिष्ठामहे वयं । पुरस्ता सर्वे कुमहित्वामन्वज्ञो वयं स्मसीति । अथ ह विश्वामित्रः प्रतीतः पुत्रांस्तुष्टाव । ते वै पुत्राः पषुमन्तो वीरवन्तो भविष्यथ । पुरा एत्रा वीरवन्तो देवरातेन गाथिना । सर्वे राध्याः स्थ पुत्रा एष वः सद्विवाचनम् । एष व कुशिका वीरो देवरातस्तमन्वितः ॥

The rendering of this Brāhmaṇa text is as follows : 26

King Hariścandra, the son of Vedhas, of the Ikṣvāku race, was childless. He had a hundred wives; from them, he did not obtain a son. Once the sages Parvata and Nārada visited his house. The king asked Nārada: "Now they, indeed, desire a son-those who are learned and those who are not-what, indeed, does one gain by a son ? Do thou tell me that, O Nārada."

To this question Nārada replied in ten *gāthās* explaining the merits of begetting a son.

"On him does he transfer (his) debt and attains immortality, if the father sees the face of the living son, when born."

'As many are the pleasures in the earth for the beings as many in the fire, as many in the waters, more than these are in a son for a father.'

'Food, indeed, is the vital breath; a resort, a dwelling is (or the cloak is); (beautiful) form indeed, gold is; cattle indeed are the

26. Tr. S.A. Dange, *Divine Hymns and Ancient Thought*, Vol-II Navaranga Publication, New Delhi

marriages; friend, indeed, the wife is; the daughter, verily is the cutting misery. The son, verily, is the light in heaven.'

'There is no world (i.e place to go after death) for the son-less; this indeed, know all beasts (creatures). Hence (to create a son anyhow) a son rides over a mother and (a brother over) a sister.'

Thus, Nārada told him. Then, he said to him (king), "solicit (run to) king Varuṇa, saying may a son be borne to me; with him (as the victim) I shall sacrifice to you."

Saying 'Be it so' king Hariścandra approached Varuṇa with the request "may a son be born to me; with him I shall sacrifice to you." 'Be it so' said Varuṇa.

Then, the son, named Rohita, was born. But on the birth of the son, the king was unwilling to give him up to Varuṇa. To the king, said Varuṇa-'A son, indeed, is born to you, sacrifice to me with him.'

Hariścandra said, "When a beast gets free from the ten (days of impurity of birth), then he becomes fit to be sacrificed. Let him be free from the ten days; then I would sacrifice to you with him."

He became free from the ten days. To him, Varuṇa said, "He is, indeed, free from the ten days; sacrifice to me with him." King said, "When the teeth get sprouted for the beast, then he becomes fit for being sacrificed. Let the teeth get sprouted for him, then I would sacrifice to you with him."

In the meantime Rohita grew into youth. Again, Varuṇa persisted in his demand, and Rohita came to know the old contract of his father with the god Varuṇa. Rohita said- 'Indeed, not!.' He

went to the forest, bow in hand, to fulfil the demand of Varuṇa. He wandered for full one year. In the meantime, Varuṇa became angry.

Viruṇa seized Hariścandra, who, as a result began to suffer from dropsy. Rothita heard this and was coming back, when Indra came and advised him to wander more and more. Third year Indra said to him for, "the fortune of a man, who sits, sits, sits also, it rises when he rises, it sleeps when he sleeps, it moves well when he moves. Wander."

Thus, Rohita wandered in the forest for the sixth year. He approached the sage Ajīgarta, the son of Sūyavas, afflicted by hunger in the forest. Ajīgarta had three sons, Śunahpuccha, Śunaśsepa, and Śunolāngūla. Rohita told him, "O seer! I shall give you hundred cows; with one of these sons I would like purchase, set free myself from Varuṇa." Then, Ajīgarta holding the eldest son and said 'not indeed him' and the mother holding the youngest son.

Thus, they agreed upon the middle one, Śunaśsepa. Then, Rohita gave for him a hundred cows, returned to the village from the forest.

Rohita brought him to his father and told him about his proposal. Hariścandra approached Varuṇa, and said 'with him I shall sacrifice to you'. Varuṇa agreed for 'a Brāhmaṇa victim is better than a Kṣatriya.' Next, Varuṇa explained to Hariścandra, this *Rājasūya* sacrifice and fixed this human victim for the *Abhiṣecanīya* rite.

The sacrifice began. Viśvāmitra was officiating as *Hotṛ*, Jamadagni as *Adhvaryu*, Agastya as *Udgatṛ* and Vasiṣṭha as

Brahmā. They could not find a person willing to bind to the sacrificial post. Ajigarta, then said 'give me another hundred cows, I will bind him.' They gave him another hundred. After, he had been bound, the *Apri mantras*, were recited, and Agni carried round him, they could not find a slaughter. Ajigarta then said, 'give me another hundred and I will kill him.' They gave him another hundred. Ajigarta came near whetting the dagger (sword).

Then Šunaśsepa thought, 'like a non-human victim, they will kill me. Alas! I shall run to the gods'. He approached (mentally) Prajāpati, with the (Rgvedic) *mantra* कस्यनून। (*Rv.I-24-1*). Prajāpati said to him - 'Agni is nearest to the gods; you do run to him alone'. He approached Agni with the *mantra*- अग्नेर्वयं प्रथमस्य (*Rv.I-24-2*). Agni says- "Savitṛ indeed, commands the creatures." He approached Savitṛ with three *mantras*- अभित्वादेव सवितार (*Rv.I-24-3*). Savitṛ Says - "You are appointed king Varuṇa." He approached king Varuṇa with the following thirty-one *mantras*. (hymn I-24-6 to 15 and I-25-1 to 21). Varuṇa says to him - 'Agni is indeed the mouth of the god; he, the best among those who are large hearted, praise him, indeed. Then we shall free you'. Šunaśsepa praised Agni with following twenty-two *mantras*. (*Rv.I-26-1 to 10 and 27-1 to 12*). Next Agni says- 'Praise the All gods (as a group called Viśvedevās); then shall we set you free.' He praised all gods with the *mantra*-नमो महद्यो ... (*Rv.I-27-13*). Then all gods proposed Indra."

Šunaśsepa praised Indra with a hymn. (*Rv.I-29*) and fifteen *mantras* of the following hymn. (*Rv.I-30-1 to 15*) When he prays - शश्वदिन्द्र। (*Rv.I-30-16*), Indra, had become pleased with his praise, presented him with a golden chariot. Indra then told him, 'Praise

the Aśvins, then we shall release you.' He then praised the Aśvins with the three *mantras*. (*Rv.I-30-17 to 19*). Aśvins answered, 'Praise Uṣas, then we shall release you.' He then praised Uṣas with the three *mantras*. (*Rv.I-30-20 to 22*). As he repeated one *mantra* after the other, the Varuṇa's fetters were loosened and the belly of Hariścandra became smaller. After he had done repeating the last *mantra*, all the fetters were taken off, and Hariścandra restorted to health again.

Then, Śunaśśepa was invited to perform the closing rite called the 'Abhiṣecaniya'. In this ceremony , he saw 'añjassva', the method of direct preparation of the Somā- juice. Verily Śunaśśepa got admiration from the *Yajñavedi* . But , foresaken by the parents, here , he had to search for a new parents. He straight way went and sat on the lap of Viśvāmitra. Now Ajigarta asked Viśvāmitra to give his son back . Viśvāmitra answered , "No for the gods have presented him to me". Since that time he was Devarāta, Viśvāmitra's son . Ajigarta further said, to Śunaśśepa " Thou ,art know as the seer from Ajigarta's family , as a descendant of the Aṅgirasa. Therefore,

O seer ,do not leave your ancestral home; return to me."

Śunaśśepa answered, "What is not found even in the hands of a Śūdra, one has seen in the hand, the knife (to kill the son); three hundred cows thou hast preferred to me, O Aṅgirasa !"

Then, Viśvāmitra also said, "Fearful was Sūyavasa's son (Ajigarta) to look at, when he was standing ready to murder, holding knife in his hand; do not become his son again; but enter my family as my son".

Viśvāmitra, again, invited Śunaśśepa to join him; "you shall be the eldest of my sons, your progeny will have priority, my divine heritage shall be yours, with that I invite you."

Viśvāmitra had a hundred and one sons. He called them all and said, 'listen to me Madhucandas, Rṣabha, Rēṇu, Aṣṭaka (and all). Are there any among your brothers who are not for Śunaśśepa's Priority?' Madhucandas was the midmost of his sons. The fifty brothers, eldest to him, thought that the proposal was not their interest. They were cursed by the angry father (Viśvāmitra) that they would have low and barbarous life.

The other fifty with Madhucandas humbly submitted whatever father proposed. They made Śunaśśepa their eldest brother. Viśvāmitra was pleased, blessed them all. Thus, Devarāta (Śunaśśepa) got over lordship of the Jahnus and the divine lore.

The *Bṛhaddevatā*²⁷ mentions, the name of Śunaśśepa three times. First and second references do not contribute to the historical study of the Śunaśśepa-ākhyāna. The third reference however, points out an incident in the legend of Śunaśśepa as given in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. This verse is - "Being praised with the stanza 'For ever' (Śaśvat: *Rv.I-30-16*), he (Indra) rejoiced in mind and gave to Śunaśśepa (the seer) a celestial car all made of gold."²⁸

In this connection, Hariyappa observes: "Here, probably Śunaśśepa the seer is meant and not the poor victim of Hariścandras sacrifice."²⁹ But, U.C. Sharma³⁰ has expressed the

27. Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, I-54; II-115; III-103

28. स्थूयमानः शश्वदिति प्रीतस्तु मनसा ददौ।

शुनश्चेपाय दिव्यं तु रथं सर्वं हिरण्यम् ॥ *Bṛhaddevatā*, III-103

29. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, pp-85-86

30. U.C.Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and Vasiṣṭhas*, pp-138-139

views that it is quite clear from every known evidence that there did not exist two persons of the name of Śunaśśepa. The victim of Hariścandra's sacrifice and the R̄gvedic seer, Śunaśśepa is considered as one person in the Vedic and post-Vedic texts. He clearly shows that the connect of the above-mentioned verse of the *Bṛhaddevatā*, is supported by the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* narrative- इन्द्रः स्थूयमानः मनस्य हिरण्यं रथं ददौ।

The *Nirukta*³¹ refers to Śunaśśepa. Yāska says that - 'women are given away, sold and abandoned; but not the man. Some say that the man is also sold, as is seem in the case of Śunaśśepa.' Of course this reference does not give any historical clue.

The *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyayāna,³² says that Śunaśśepa was son of Ajigarta and the adopted son of Viśvāmitra, who was provided to the latter by gods. It is good support to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* version of the Śunaśśepa legend.

Ṣadguruśiṣya the author of the commentary *Vedārtha dīpikā* on the *Sarvānukramaṇī*³³ follows the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and described the Śunaśśepa story in twenty-two stanzas.

Vāsiṣṭha Dharmasāstra, one of the ancient works on Hindu law, includes Śunaśśepa, in the list of the types of sons. Here, Śunaśśepa exemplifies two kinds of sons.³⁴ i.e; *Kṛita* and

31. स्त्रीणां दानविक्रयातिसर्ग विद्यन्ते न पुंसः। पुंसोपित्येके। शौनश्चेष्टे दर्शनात्। Yāska, *Nirukta* III-4,

32. Kātyayana, *Sarvānukramani*.

33. अजीर्णतः शुनश्चेष्टे स कृत्रिमो वैश्वामित्रो देवरातो | Ṣadguru Śisya, *Vedārtha Dīpikā* cf. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvamitras and Vasisthas*, p-139

34. अथादायादबन्धुनां सहोढा एव प्रथमः। या गर्भिणी संस्कीयते सहोढः पुत्रो भवति। दत्तको द्वितीयः। यं मातापितरौ दद्याताम् क्रीतस् तृतीयः। तच्छ शुनश्चेष्टेन व्याख्याताम्। स्वयमुपगतश् चतुर्थः। तच्छ शुनश्चेष्टेन व्याख्यातम्।

शुनश्चेष्टो वै यूपे नियुक्तो देवतास् तुष्टाव। तस्येह देवताः पाशम् मुमुञ्चु स्तां ऋत्विज ऊचुः। ममैवायम् पुत्रोस्त्वीति तान् ह न संपदे। ते संपादयामासुः। एषः एव यं कामयेत् तस्य पुत्रोस्त्वीति। तस्य ह विश्वमित्रो होतासीत् तस्य पुत्रत्वम् इयाय।

Vasiṣṭha Dharmasāstra, Q. *R̄gvedic Legends Through the Ages*, p-200

Svayamupāgata: ‘a son who is bought for price’ and ‘a son who approaches by himself.’ Here *Kṛīta* is a kind of son who is bought for price; therefore, as Śunaśsepa was a *Kṛīta* son for Hariścandra; and secondly *Svayamupāgata* is called that Śunaśsepa approached Viśvāmitra by himself and chose him as his father.

Sāyaṇa has not contribute to the historical study for the Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna. In his commentary on the *Rgveda*, he quoting the story from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.

It is evident from Sāyaṇa’s commentary on the *Rgveda* that he has no special point on this Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna adding to its historical aspect.

The *Sūtra* works have given a place to the Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna in religious rites. In this connection, the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*³⁵ mentions that the Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna is related to a king, who has conquered a battle, even though he was not performing any sacrifice. Thereby, he did not incur even the slightest evil. The *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,³⁶ the *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*,³⁷ and the *Hiranyakesi Śrauta Sūtra*,³⁸ mention at the end of the Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna that the sacrificer offers the golden seat to the *Hotṛ* and a cluster of golden grass to the *Adhvaryu*. This *Sūtra* texts show that Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna was considered holy when it was related just after the coronation of a king. At the same time it was prescribed to be related when some king returned after winning the battle.

35. *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, IX -3-13

36. *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XV-6-5

37. *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*, XVIII-19-14

38. *Hiranyakesi Śrauta Sūtra*, XIII-6-38

The *Rāmāyaṇa*³⁹ records the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna in a very different form. In the *Bālakāṇḍa*, sixty and sixty one cantos are related to the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna. After careful examination of the Śunaśśepa story, as it is given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* version, it is quite in contrast with which that followed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*. Certain notable changes have been introduced in the *Rāmāyaṇa* version. These are⁴⁰ :

1. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the sacrificer is king Harścandra; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* the performer is king Ambarīṣa.
2. In the sacrifice is arranged to appease Varuṇa's anger; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* the sacrificial victim was stolen away by Indra.
3. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, Śunaśśepa is said to be the son of Ajīgarta; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is said to be the son of Ruci.
4. In the former, Viśvāmitra comes on the sense only at the time of sacrifice as one of the officiating priests; in the latter he has entered in the story even before the sacrifice, but does not attend it. He also teaches Śunaśśepa two *gāthās* to be recited at the proper time to prevent the latter's death.
5. The revolt and degradation of Viśvāmitra's sons occur after the sacrifice in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*; while it preceded the sacrifice in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.
6. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, only 51 sons of Viśvāmitra, of whom Madhucchandas is leader, obey their father's command to accept Śunaśśepa's primogeniture. But in the *Rāmāyaṇa* all the sons

39. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 1-60-4 to I-61-27

40. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiśthas*, p-143

including Madhuccandas take part in the revolt and its consequence. The command also seem to be strange and funny in the *Rāmāyaṇa* version. It is, that in order to save Śunaśśepa, all the sons should offer themselves as victims at the sacrifice.

7. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* depicts that Viśvāmitra adopts Śunaśśepa as his son and includes him in his family. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is completely silent about what happens to Śunaśśepa after his deliverance.

Both texts are quite different from each other in their nature as well as content. It is quite clear that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has made full use of fancy in introducing changes in the main theme of the legend. It is also possible that Vālmiki has taken into consideration the changed form of the ākhyāna which could have been current in his contemporary society as a folk-tale.⁴¹

The *Mahabharata*⁴² sketches an outline of the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna at one place only. It occurs in the narration of numerous deeds performed by Viśvāmitra as recorded in the third chapter of the *Anusāsana parva*. However, the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna is given a secondary importance.

The narration in the *Mahābhārata* is based on both the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* versions of the story. The

41. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvamitras and the Vasiṣṭhas*, p-144

42. *Mahābhārata, Anusāsana Parva*, 13-3, 6-8

ऋचीकस्यात्मजश्चैव शुनश्शेपो महातपः ।
विमोक्षितो महासत्रात् पशुताम् अप्युपागतः ॥
हरिश्चन्द्र क्रतौ देवांस्तोषयित्वात्म तेजसा ।
पुत्रां इनुसंप्राप्तो विश्वामित्रस्यधीमतः ॥
नाभिवादयते ज्येष्ठाम् देवरातम् नरादिप ।
पुत्रः पञ्चाशद् एवापि शसाः श्वपचतां गताः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa and the *Mahābhārata* also take Śunaśśepa as son of Ṛcīka; while *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* mention him as son of Ajigarta. The performance of sacrifice by Hariścandra is a common point in the *Mahābhārata* as well as in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*; while in the *Rāmāyaṇa* the performer is Ambariṣa. The number of Viśvāmitra's sons was fifty and they were cursed by him; this is also a common point in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* says that there were 101 sons of Viśvāmitra of whom the first fifty were cursed.

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*,⁴³ the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna has been narrated in two places. The majority of its portion is similar to *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* version. Here the name of Hariścandra's father is given as Triśaṅku as against Vedhas in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* narrative. Besides, the *Harivamśa Purāṇa*,⁴⁴ the *Vāyu Purāṇa*,⁴⁵ and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*⁴⁶ narrate Śunaśśepa's adoption by Viśvāmitra. Only the name Haridaśva of the *Harivamśa Purāṇa* is substituted for Hariścandra.⁴⁷ These three *Purāṇa* texts mention the story in the context of the birth episode of Jamadagni and Viśvāmitra. The families of Kuśika and Bhārgava were interrelated through Satyavatī, elder sister of Viśvāmitra, with whom Ṛcīka Bhārgava married. Jamadagni is the eldest son of Ṛcīka and Satyavatī, and Śunaśśepa is the midmost, Śunahpuccha is the

43. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, IX-7-7 to 27 and IX-16-29 to 37

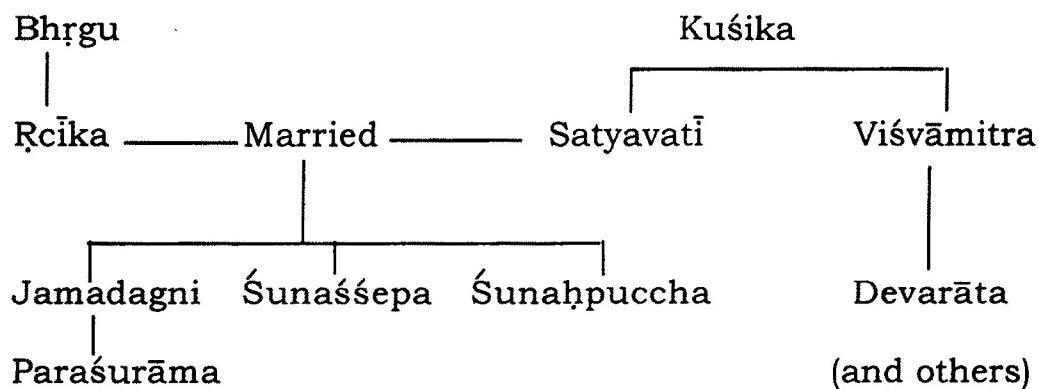
44. *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, I-27 41 to 58

45. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 91-84 to 97

46. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, III-6- to 71

47. हरिदश्वस्य यज्ञे तु पश्यत्वे विनियोजितः *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, I-27-56

youngest.⁴⁸ However, the genealogy given in the *Purāṇas* may be as below:



But, in the opinion of the modern scholars, genealogy given is above unreliable. In this connection Hariyappa⁴⁹ opines- 'The author of *Harivamśa*, whoever it is, simply appended that series of three brothers to this illustrious Bhṛgu line substituting Jamadagni's name for the eldest !..... At any rate, the latter do not fit in with the context.'

Pargitter⁵⁰ has conceived that Śunaśṣepa was a grandson of Satyavatī and Rcīka; and therefore the grand-nephew of Visvamitra. He has added that Ajigarta, (who was said to be father of Śunaśṣepa in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*) was the son of Rcīka and younger brother of Jamadagni. Further, he says that it may be assumed that if the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* has made a mistake in recording the name of Hariścandra's father; it may have done the same thing in the case of Ajigarta's father.

48. और्वस्यैवं ऋचिकस्य सत्यवत्यां महायशः।

जमदग्नीस्तपोवीराज्ञे ब्रह्मविदां वराः।

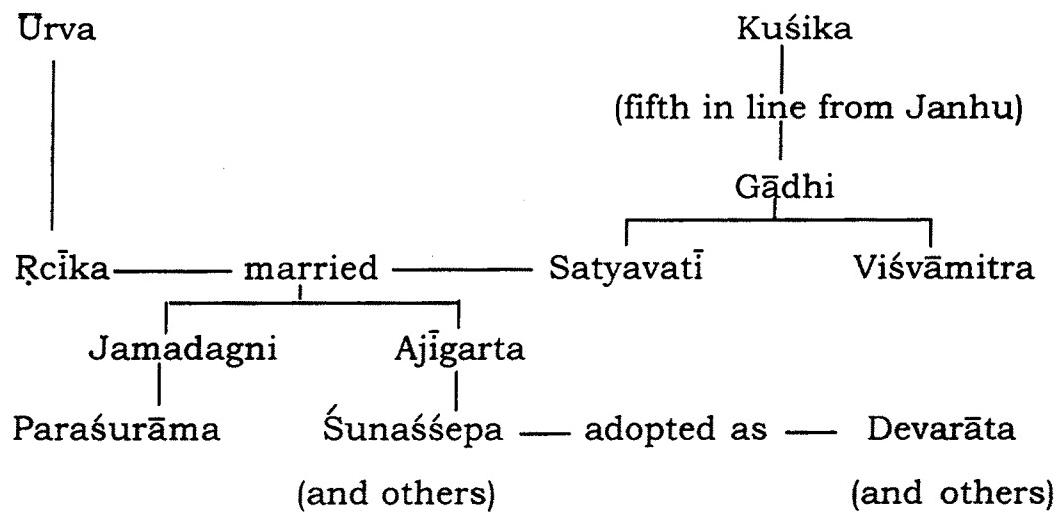
मथ्यमश्चशुनश्शेपः शुनःपुच्छः कनिष्ठकः। *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, I-27-12,35

49. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, p-212

50. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp-198-206,219

U.C. Sharma - "the genealogical position of Śunaśsepa as envisaged by Pargitter seems to be more possible. Ajigarta, father of Śunaśsepa, may have been younger brother of Jamadagni and son of Ṛcīka and Satyavatī. Thus, Śunaśsepa becomes the grand-nephew of Viśvāmitra. Without this hypothesis, it seems well-nigh impossible to bring the Vedic source in line with the post-Vedic sources."⁵¹

Reconstructed genealogy may be as below :



The reading of Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna as can be seen in the *R̄gveda* or *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* is found to be the basis for its development as found in the *Rāmayaṇa*. There appears to be much difference between the readings of these ākhyāna in those texts. But the reason behind such modification in the Śunaśsepa - ākhyāna of the *Rāmayaṇa* has remained a question before the historians till today.

51. U.C.Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭhas*, p-154

ii. The Ākhyāna of Urvaśī and Purūravas

An account of Urvaśī and Purūravas first time occurs in the *Rgveda*, and ninety-fifth hymn in the tenth *Maṇḍala* contains a dialogue between Urvaśī and Purūravas. Hence the Vedic version of this myth as found in the *Rgveda* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, is considered to be its the oldest form. The post-Vedic version of it may be said to be a development form of the Vedic version.

The *Rgveda* identifies Purūravas as an excellent sacrificer.¹ So also Urvaśī is spoken of as giving divine birth for a seer Vasiṣṭha, who is identified there with fire.² The R̄gvedic story as can be found in the hymn X-95, may be summarised as follows:

Urvaśī, a celestial Apsaras (nymph), fell in love with a mortal king, Purūravas. She agreed to go and stay with the king. She laid down certain conditions, violation of which would compel her to leave his company. After some time, the Gandharvas, who felt the absence of Urvaśī, so arranged the matter that the king was compelled to violate the conditions. They carried the pet lambs of Urvaśī off. When her lambs were carried off, she wanted to take leave of Purūravas. The king tried to appeal to her motherly feelings in the name of his child which she was carrying in her womb (*mantras* 12-13). But, Urvaśī told him frankly that she would never return. She told him that he should not die that way for nothing, as there was no hope of winning the heart of an unwilling woman. She concluded that the friendship of a woman was not reliable and that women at heart are

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1. त्वमग्ने मनवे द्यामवाशयः पुरुरवसे सुकृते सुकृतरः । *Rv.* I-31-4
 2. उतासि मैत्रावरुणो वसिष्ठोर्वश्या ब्रह्मनसोऽधि जातः । *Rv.* VII-33-11

comparable to wicked wolves. (*mantra 15*). This story ends with the promise from the gods, that king Purūravas would be happy in the other world. (*mantra 18*).

The *Samvāda* between Urvaśī and Purūravas is as below:

Purūravas : Ho indignant wife, with mind relenting, stay awhile, let us now interchange discourse. These, our secret thoughts, while unspoken, did not yield us happiness even at the last day.³

Urvaśī : What can we accomplish through such discourse ? I have passed away from you like the first of the downs. Return, Purūravas, to your dwelling. I am as hard to catch as the wind.⁴

Purūravas : The arrow is not to be cast from the quiver for glory. I am no longer the impetuous despoiler of the cattle of the enemy, nor of their hundred fold riches. My prowess having lost its strength, my might no longer flashes forth; my warriors the terrifiers of the foe here not my shout in battle.⁵

Urvaśī : If, Uṣas, this Urvaśī, offering food and wealth to her father-in-law, lower her husband she has repaid from the neighbouring house to her husband's home, where she loved her lord being delighted night and day by his embraces.⁶

3. हये जाये मनसा तिष्ठ घोरे वाचांसि मिश्रा कृणवावहै नु ।
न नौ मन्त्रा अनुदितास एते मयस्करन् परतरे चनाहन् ॥ *Rv. X-95-1*
4. किमेता वाचा कृणवा तवाहं प्राक्मिषमुषसामप्रियेव ।
पुरुरवः पुनरस्तं परेहि दुरापना वातइवाहमस्मि ॥ *Rv. X-95-2*
5. इषुर्न श्रिय इषुधेरसना गोषाः शतसा न रंहिः ।
अवीरे क्रतौ वि दविद्युत्त्वोर्ग न मायुं चितयन्त धुनयः ॥ *Rv. X-95-3*
6. सा वसु दधती श्वशुराय वय उषो यदि वष्ट्यन्तिगृहात् ।
अस्तं ननक्षे यस्मिज्ञाकन्दिवा नक्तं श्वथिता वैतसेन ॥ *Rv. X-95-4*

Thrice a day, Purūravas, have you embraced me, you have loved me without a rival; I have followed (you) to your dwelling, you, hero, have been the sovereign of my person.⁷

Purūravas : Sujurṇī, Śreṇī, Sumna-āpi, Hṛdecakṣus, Granthini and the swift-moving Urvaśī who arrived they, decorated and purple-tinted did not go first, they lowed like mitch-cows for protections.⁸

Urvaśī : As soon as he was born the of the wives gods surrounded him, the spontaneously flowing rivers nourished him, for the gods reared you, Purūravas, for a mighty conflict, for the slaughter of the Dasyus.⁹

Purūravas : When, becoming there companion, Purūravas the mortal associated with these immortal nymphs who had abandoned their bodies, they fled from me like a timid doe, like horses harnessed to a chariot.¹⁰

When a mortal mixing with these immortal nymphs, has converse with them with words and actions, they becoming ducks, do not show their bodies like playful horses champing the bit.¹¹

7. क्रिः स्म माहः श्नथयो कैतसेनोत स्म मेऽव्यत्यै पृणासि ।

पुरुरवोऽनु ते केतमायं राजा मे वीर तन्वस्तदासीः ॥ *Rv.* X-95-5

8. या सुजूर्णीः श्रेणीः सुमनआपिहिदचक्षुर्न ग्रन्थिनी चरण्युः ।

ता अञ्जयोऽरुणयो न सस्तुः श्रिये गावो न धेनवेऽनवन्त ॥ *Rv.* X-95-6

9. समस्मिज्जायमान आसत ग्ना उतेमवर्धन्नद्यश्वगूर्ताः ।

महे यत्वा पुरुरवो रणायावर्धयन् दस्युहत्याय देवाः ॥ *Rv.* X-95-7

10. सचा यदासु जहतीष्वत्कममानुषीषु मानुषो निषेवे ।

अप स्म मत्तरसन्ति न भुज्युस्ता अत्रसत्रथस्पृशो नाश्वाः ॥ *Rv.* X-95-8

11. यदासु मर्तो अमृतासु निष्पृक्सं क्षोणीभिः क्रतुभिर्न पृडक्ते ।

ता आतयो न तन्वः शुभ्मत स्वा अश्वासो न क्रिळयो दन्दशानाः ॥ *Rv.* X-95-9

Ūrvāśī : She shone like flashing lighting, bringing me the desirable dews of heaven, has appeared a son able in act and friendly to man has been born, Ūrvāśī has prolonged my lengthened existence.¹²

Ūrvāśī : You have been born thus to protect the earth; you have deposited this vigour in me; knowing (the future) I have instructed you what to do every day; you have not listened to me; why do you now address me, neglectful of my instruction.¹³

Purūravas : When shall a son born of you claim me as a father, and, crying, shed a tear on recognizing (me) ? what son shall sever husband and wife who are of one mind, now that the fire shines upon your husband's parents ?¹⁴

Ūrvāśī : Let me reply, your son will shed tears, crying out and calling aloud when the expected auspicious time arrives; I will send you that child which is yours in me, depart to your house you can not, simpleton, detain me.¹⁵

Purūravas : Your husband who sports with you may now (depart) never to return depart to proceed to a distant region. Either let him sleep upon the lap of *Nirṛti* or let the swift-moving wolves devour him.¹⁶

12. विद्युत्त या पतन्ति दविद्वोद्धरन्ती मे अप्या काम्यानि ।

जनिष्ठो अपो नर्यः सुजातः प्रोर्वशी तिरत दीर्घमायुः ॥ *Rv.* X-95-10

13. जज्ञिष इत्था गोपीश्चाय हि दधाथ तत्पूरुरवो म ओजः ।

अशासं त्वा विदुषी सस्मिन्नहन्त्र म आशृणोः किमभुग्वदासि ॥ *Rv.* X-95-11

14. कदा सूनुः पितरं जात इच्छाच्यक्रन्नाश्रुवर्तयद्विजानन् ।

को दंपती समनसा वि यूयोदथ दयग्निः श्वशुरेषु दीदयत् ॥ *Rv.* X-95-12

15. प्रति ब्रवाणि वर्तयते अशु चक्रन्न क्रन्ददाध्ये शिवायै ।

प्र तते हिनवा यते अस्मे परेह्यस्तं नहि मूर मापः ॥ *Rv.* X-95-13

16. सुदेवो अद्य प्रपतेदनावृत्परावतं परमां गन्तवा उ ।

अथा शयीत निर्ऋतेरुपस्थेऽधैनं वृका रभसासो अद्युः ॥ *Rv.* X-95-14

Ūrvāśī : Die not, Purūravas, fall not, let not the hideous wolves devour you. Female friendships do not exist, their hearts are the hearts of jackals.¹⁷

When changed in form I wandered amongst mortals, I dwelt with them four delightful years. I ate once a day a small quality of butter; satisfied with that I now depart.¹⁸

Purūravas : I, Vasiṣṭha, bring under subjection Ūrvāśī who fills the firmament with lustre and measures out the rain. May Purūravas, the bestower of the auspicious rite, abide near you; come back, my heart is burning.¹⁹

Ūrvāśī: These gods said to you, Aīla, since you are indeed subject to death, let your progeny propitiate your gods with oblations, you shall rejoice with me in heaven.²⁰

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa : Version of Ūrvāśī-Purūrava Myth

The version of Ūrvāśī-Purūrava story as given in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa may be read with some modification of the Rgvedic version. In the ritual context, the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa uses parts of the material from the Rgveda with certain additions necessary for

17. पुरुरवो मा मृथा मा प्र पस्तो मा त्वा वृकासो अशिवास उ क्षन् ।
न वै स्त्रैणानि सख्यानि सन्ति सालावृकाणां हृदयान्येता ॥ *Rv.* X-95-1533.
18. यद्विरूपाचरं मर्त्येष्ववसं रात्रीः शरद्धृतसत्रः ।
धृतस्य स्तोकं सकृदह्न आश्नां तादेवेदं तातुपाणा चरामि ॥ *Rv.* X-95-16
19. अन्तरिक्षप्रां रजसो विमानीमुप शिक्षाम्युर्वशीं वसिष्ठः ।
उप त्वा रातिः सुकृतस्य तिष्ठान्नि वर्तस्व हृदयं तप्यते मे ॥ *Rv.* X-95-17
20. इति त्वा देवा इम आहुरैळ यथेमेतद्वसि मृत्युबन्धुः ।
प्रजा ते देवान् हविषा यजाति स्वर्ग उ त्वमपि मादयासे ॥ *Rv.* X-95-17

the ritual-symbolism. The story of *Ūrvāśī* and *Purūravas* as found in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI-5-1. 1 to 17) is as follows:

उर्वशी हाप्सराḥ पुरुरवसमैडं चकमे । तं ह विन्दमानोवाच - त्रिः स्म माहो वैतसेन दण्डेन हतात् । अकामां स्म मा निपद्यासै । मो स्म त्वा नग्नं दर्शम् । एष वै न स्त्रीणामुपचारः, इति । सा हास्मिन् ज्योगुवास । अपि हास्माद्गर्भिण्यास तावज्ज्योग्यास्मिन्नुवास । ततो ह गन्धर्वाः समूदिरेज्योग्या इयमुर्वशी मनुष्येष्ववात्सीत् । उप जानीतयथेयं पुनरागच्छेत्, इति । तस्यै ह अविर्द्धि-उरणा शयन उपबद्धास । ततो ह गन्धर्वा अन्यतरमुरणं प्रमेशुः । सा होवाच - अवीर इव बत मेऽजन इव पुत्रं हरन्ति, इति । द्वितीयं प्रमेशुः । सा ह तथैवोवाच । अथ हायमीक्षांचक्रे - कथं तु तदवीरं कथमजनं स्याद्यत्राहं स्याम्, इति । स नग्नं एवानूत्पपात । चिरं तम्नेन यद्वासः पर्यधास्यत । ततो ह गन्धर्वा विद्युतं जनयाज्चन्नुः । तं यथा दिवैव नग्नं ददर्श । ततो हैवेयं तिरोबभूव । पुनरैमीत्येत्तिरोभूताम् । स आद्या जल्पन् कुरुक्षेत्रं समया चचार अन्यतःप्लक्षेतिबिसवति । तस्यै हाद्यन्तेनवव्राज । तद्व ता अप्सरस आतयो भूत्वा परिपुलुविरे । तं हेयं ज्ञात्वोवाच - अयं वै स मनुष्यो यस्मिन्नहमवात्सम्, इति । ता होचुः - तस्मै वा आविरसाम, इति । तथा, इति तस्मै हाविरासुः । तां हायं ज्ञात्वाभिपरोवाद - घृतस्य स्तोकं सकृदन्न आश्नां तादेवेदं तातृपाणा चरामि ॥ इति ॥

तदेतदुक्तप्रत्युक्तं पञ्चदशर्च बद्धुचाः प्राहुः । तस्यै ह हृदयमाव्ययाज्यकार । सा होवाच - संवत्सरतमीं रात्रिमागच्छतात् । तन्म एकां रात्रिमन्ते शयितासे । जात उ तेऽयं तर्हि पुत्रो भविता, इति । स ह संवत्सरतमीं रात्रिमाजगामेद्विरण्यविमितानि । तथो हैनमेवमूचुः - एतत्प्रपद्यस्व, इति । तद्वास्मै तामुपप्रजिध्युः । सा होवाच-गन्धर्व वै ते प्रातर्वरं दातारस्तं वृणासै, इति । तं वै मे त्वमेव वृष्णीष्व, इति युष्माकमेवैकोऽसानीति ब्रूतात्, इति । तस्मै ह प्रातर्गन्धर्वा वरं ददुः । स होवाच - युष्माकमेवैकोऽसानि, इति । ते होचु-न वै सा मनुष्येष्वनेर्यज्ञिया तनूरस्ति ययेष्ट्वास्माकमेकः स्यात्, इति । तस्मै ह स्थाल्यामोप्याग्नि प्रददुः । अनेनेष्ट्वास्माकमेको भविष्यसि, इति । तं च ह कुमारं चादायावव्राज । सोऽरण्य एवाग्नि निधाय कुमारेणैव ग्राममेयाय । पुनरैमीत्येत्तिरोभूतम् । योऽग्निरश्वत्यं तं या स्थाली शमीं ताम् । स पुनर्गन्धवनियाय ।

ते होचुः - संवत्सरं चातुष्णाश्यमोदनं पच । स एतस्यैवाश्वत्यस्य तिस्त्रस्तिस्त्र समीधो घृतेनान्वज्य समिद्वतीभिर्घृतवतिभिर्घृतवतिभिरभ्याधत्तात् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जनिता स एव स भविता, इति । ते होचु - पुरोऽक्षमिव वा एतत् । आश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणीं कुरुष्व शमीमयीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जनिता स एव स भविता, इति । ते होचुः - परोक्षमिव वा एतत् । आश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणीं कुरुष्वाश्वत्थीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जनिता स एव स भविता, इति । स आश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणि चक्रे । आश्वत्थीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जन्मे स एव स आस । तेनेष्ट्वा गन्धर्वाणामेक आस । तस्मादाश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणीं कुर्वीताश्वत्थीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जयिते स एव स भवति । तेनेष्ट्वा गन्धर्वाणामेको भवति ।

The rendering of this *Brāhmaṇa* text is as below :²¹

The nymph *Ūrvaśī* with amorous feelings desired Purūravas, the son of Idā. While wedding him, she said to him, "Three times a day shall you strike me with the cane-rod; shall not lie with me when I am not desiring; may not I see you naked. This indeed, is the way of behaviour with us women."

She, then, dwelt with him for a long time. Moreover, she was with a foetus from him. Then the Gandharvas conversed mutually - "This *Ūrvaśī* stayed among the humans for a long time. Consider how she might come back." Now to her bed was tied, a ewe, with her two lambs. Then the Gandharvas lifted away one lamb. She said, "Alas! They are lifting away my 'son,' as if this place be heroless; as if it be without a person." They stole away the second. She, indeed, spoke in the same way.

Then Purūravas thought to himself, 'How could it be heroless, how without a person, where I be!' naked itself (as he was, in the night in his bed) he darted up (following them). Too long did he think if would be if he would wear a clook! Then did the Gandharvas produce the lightning; (and) (she) saw him naked, as in the day itself. Then that moment itself, verily, she got out of sight - "Again do I come," he said and went after the vanished *Ūrvaśī*. Wailing in metal agony, he roamed about the whole Kurukṣetra. There was a lotus-lake called *Anyataḥplakṣā* (situated beside a *Plakṣa* tree). Along its (her the name is feminine) bank he wandered. In it were the nymphs swimming becoming water-birds. Indeed, recognising him, she

21. Tr. S.A.Dange, Divine Hymns and Ancient Thought, Vol.II, Navaranga Publication, New Delhi, pp-225-230.

(Urvaśī, in the form of a water-bird), spoke, "He, verily, is the man with whom I dwelt." They indeed, said, 'Let us be visible to him.' "Be it so" (she said). To him they became visible. Recognising her he uttered in front of her.

Here, R̄gvedic *mantras* are used (*Rv.X-95-1,2,14,15,16*).

It is this speech and counter speech (i.e conversation) that comprise fifteen verses, as the *Bahūrcas* (the followers of the *R̄gveda*) say. Indeed, her heart gave way (became soft and got oozing with feelings). She said, "Do come (here) on the yearly night. Then shall you lie with me for that one night. This one born there would certainly be your son."

He verily came on the yearly night, to the golden dwelling (that sprang up at that place). Then did (they) the Gandharvas say to him- "Resort to this." Then did they send her to him. She said, "The Gandharvas would grant you a boon in the morning; choose it." "That, indeed, you alone choose on my behalf" he said (i.e. you instruct me what to choose). "Say-Let me be one amongst you" (said she). Him the Gandharvas granted a boon in the next morning. He said, "Let me be one amongst you." They said, "verily that sacrifice-worthy form of fire is not among men, by sacrificing with which one would be one among us; (so) to him they gave fire, pouring it into a pan, saying, "By sacrificing with this you will be one among us." Purūravas came back taking it and the boy (his son). Placing the fire in the forest itself, he came to the locality with the boy alone. Thinking 'I shall come back again; he went back to it (that had now) disappeared.

What was the fire, that (now had became) the *Aśvattha*; what was the pan (now had became) the *Śami* tree! He again came back to the Gandharvas.

They said, "cook a mess (of boiled rice) sufficient for four (priests), for one year. Each time (i.e. at every cooking and offering to the priests), anointing with ghee three faggots of the *Aśvattha*, place them (in the fire) with *mantras* (from the *Rgveda*) having (the words) *Samidh* (kindling stick) and *ghṛta* (ghee) in them (on the fire used for cooking the mess). The fire that would be born therefrom will be the same (as has now disappeared). They, moreover, said. "But this is indeed esoteric. Prepare the upper *araṇī* (wooden slab) from *Aśvattha* alone and from the *Śami* the lower one. The fire that would be produced therefrom would be the same (the one lost)" They (again) said, "This is indeed, esoteric. Prepare the upper *araṇī* from *Aśvattha* itself and the lower one (also) from *Aśvattha* itself. The fire that would be produced therefrom would be the same." He prepared the upper *araṇī* from *Aśvattha* itself; from the *Aśvattha* (itself) the lower one. The fire born therefrom was the same one. By offering with (into) it, he got to be one among the Gandharvas. Therefore, from the *Aśvattha* itself should be one prepare the upper *araṇī*; from the *Aśvattha* (alone) the lower one. The fire which is born there from became the same (ancient one, given by the Gandharvas). Offering with it, one becomes one with the Gandharvas.

The whole story of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* runs in the same way of the R̄gvedic version, except the addition that at the lamentation of Purūravas, *Ūrvāśi* consented to live with him once at the end of the year. In the R̄gvedic version, there is no consideration for the

lamentation of the king. According to her promise, she met the king at the end of the year. During this night she suggested to the king that next morning, when the Gandharvas would arrive to take her away, he should request them to show him the way by which he too could become a Gandharva like them so as to be able to enjoy her company for ever. Purūravas acted according to her suggestions. Gandharvas suggested to him to worship the fire produced from the Śami wood. Purūravas performed the worship of the fire and attained the status of Gandharvas. Ultimately he met his beloved Urvaśī and enjoyed her company for a long time.

The R̄gvedic version which does not concede even a night's stay with Urvaśī to Purūravas after their separation, is preserved in the *Bṛhaddevatā* and the *Sarvānukramanī*.

According to the *Bṛhaddevatā*, Indra, being jealous of Purūravas, ordered his *Vajra* to destroy Urvaśī's love for him.²²

In the *Sarvānukramanī* of the *R̄gveda*, Indra does not appear at all. In this version, the curse of Mitrā-Varuṇa is mentioned, owing to which Urvaśī had to go to the earth and live with Purūravas on certain conditions.²³

22. पुरुरवसी राजर्षाव् अप्सरास्तूर्वशी पुरा ।
न्यवसत्संविदं कृत्वा तस्मिन्धर्मं चचार च ॥
तया तस्य च संवासम् असूयन् पाकशासनः ।
पैतामहं चानुरागम् इद्रवच्चापि तस्य तु ॥
स तयोस्तु वियोगार्थं पाश्वस्थं वज्रमब्रवीत् ।
प्रीतिं भिन्द्व तयोर्वज्रं मम चेदिच्छसि प्रियम् ॥
Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, VII 147 to 149 p-91

23. Kātyayana, *Sarvānukramanī*, *Rv.X-95*

Ūrvāśī-Purūravas Story in Purāṇic Version

The Purāṇic version of Ūrvāśī-Purūravas story in the *Harivamśa Purāṇa*²⁴ corresponds to the R̥gvedic gvedic version. According to this, the curse of Brahmā caused the fall of Ūrvāśī on the earth. It adds that in the course of her stay on the earth, she began to live with the king, Purūravas on certain conditions. Accordingly, on the violation of those conditions, she disappeared from the court of the king. In course of searching her out, the king wandered hither and thither. Once he met her in Kurukṣetra. She promised to meet him for a single night. Ūrvāśī while meeting him at night, suggested to him to seek the help of Gandharvas to attain to their status. Purūravas acted according to her suggestion. Gandharvas offered him a 'Agnisthāli' and asked him to perform a sacrifice. He took the 'Agnisthāli' and kept it in the forest and went to his house with his son. When he returned from his house he did not find 'Agnisthāli' there; he found an *Aśvattha* tree grown on a *Śami* tree. Gandharvas again suggested to him to make *Araṇī* out of the tree and produce fire by rubbing it. He did so and got the fire. He performed a sacrifice with the help of that fire and attained the status of a Gandharva.

The *Matsya Purāṇa*²⁵ and the *Padma Purāṇa*,²⁶ give another mould to the story. These *Purāṇas* drop the condition and introduce the curse of Bharata. The text of the story in both *Purāṇas* is quite identical. The main features of the story of the *Matsya Purāṇa* are as follows:

24. *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, I-26, 1 to 49

25. Prof. H.H. Wilson, *Matsya Purāṇa*, 24, 10 to 32

26. *Padma Purāṇa*, *Sṛṣṭi Khāṇḍa*, XII.52 to 86

Purūravas was a close friend of Indra. He visited him daily. One day while he was returning from the court of Indra, he saw that the Apsaras (i.e. Urvaśī and Citralekhā) were being taken away by the demon Keśi. He heard their cry and hurried to their rescue. He defeated the demon Keśi, recovered them handed them over to Indra.

Once, a drama, ‘*Lakṣmi Svayamvara*’ was staged under the direction of Bharata. Urvaśī was participant in it. She, while discharging the role of Lakṣmi, looked at the face of Purūravas and was fascinated by his personality. Consequently she forgot her action and uttered irrelevant words. For this fault of hers, Bharata (the director), cursed her to fall on the earth in the form of a creeper. When pacified, he brought moderation to the curse to the extent that Purūravas would meet her there in the form of a ghost. As a result of this curse, Urvaśī came to the earth and bore eight sons to Purūravas.²⁷

Rāmāyaṇa Version of Urvaśī-Purūravas Story

The *Rāmāyaṇa* gives a different mould to this story. The gist of the *Rāmāyaṇa*²⁸ version of this story is as follows :

1. Once Mitra asked Urvaśī to come to him for sexual intercourse at a mutually agreed time, but she did not pay much attention to his request.
2. While she was playing in the Varuṇālaya, Varuṇa saw her and was enchanted by her beauty. He expressed his ardent desire

27. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 24, 10 to 32

28. *Rāmāyaṇa*, VII.56 (chapter)

Ed. N. Ramaratnam, *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam*, Madras, 1958, pp- 1033-1034

to cohabit with her. But when declined to offer herself to him, he discharged his semen in a jar.

3. When Urvaśī attended sage Mitra, the latter got encouraged with her misconduct and cursed her to fall from the heaven and go to the earth. Later on, when pacified, he proposed the modification that she should attend *Rājarṣi Purūravas*, the son of Budha. Due to this curse, Urvaśī came to the ‘*Prātisthāna*’ and lived with Purūravas. She bore a son, Āyu, to him. When the period of her curse came to an end, she returned to the heaven.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* version, the story drops all the conditions mentioned in the Vedic and the Purāṇic versions.

Urvaśī Purūravas Story in the Kathāsaritsāgara

There is one more version of the story preserved in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*²⁹ of Somadeva. According to it, Urvaśī and Purūravas fell in love with each other at first sight in the ‘*Nandanavana*’ of Indra. At the command of Viṣṇu, Indra brought about the union of the two, who thereafter went to live on the earth in the king’s palace. Once, while Purūravas was witnessing Rambhā’s dance in the heaven, he laughed at some mistake in her technique. Her teacher Tumburu became enraged and cursed him that he would be separated from his Urvaśī. Gandharvas thereupon removed Urvaśī from the king and the two lovers greatly grieved. Purūravas propitiated Viṣṇu, who freed him from Tumburu’s curse and once more united him with Urvaśī.

29. Somadeva, *Kathāsaritsāgara*, III. 4 to 30.

The Rgvedic story itself, from which all the different versions have originated, is undoubtedly only an exhalation of a popular fairy tale consisting of the following main parts :

1. A fairy from the other world falls in love with a human and seeks his company on the earth;
2. In order to be able to return to her home after a short sojourn (time), she puts him certain conditions, the violation of which would leave her free to abandon him;
3. The violation takes place as pre-planned, with the help of the Gandharvas, the friends of the fairy (nymph) and then she returns.
4. The mortal grieves and wanders in search of her until she appears before him only for a short while to impress upon his mind the inevitability of the situation owing to the natural frivolity and hard-heartedness of women.

The garb of a dramatic dialogue, including the names of the characters, and a few embellishments such as the arguments of the frustrated lover as also the vague promise of a meeting in the other world by the favour of the gods, were the work of Rgvedic poet.

Thus, the *Akhyānas* of Sunaśṣepa and Purūravas can be traced to the Rgvedic hymns or some ancient tradition reflected in the hymns. These hymns, by their dramatic quality, indicate the existence of the semi-dramatic and semi-epic *Akhyāna* literature out of which grew the later historical epics and dramas.

7. Socio-historical Institutions in the Rgvedic Age

The Grāma, Self-Contained :

A *Grāma* ordinarily connotes a settled and not a nomadic state of existence. The word *Grāma* is used in the sense of a village, in the Rgvedic *mantra*.¹ A *grāma* is consisted of a number of *grahas* (houses), tenanted by several families (*Kulas*). The families (*Kulas*) were living under the leadership of *Kulapas*.² The *Grāmāṇi*³ was the leader of the village. Each *Kula* was subdivided into a number of householders or *Grahapatis*.⁴ The mistress of the household was called *Grahapatni*.⁵ The cows were kept within the compound of the house, as there is distinct mention of playful calves and children in the house.⁶ The cows were passing the night in *Goṣṭhas* which were generally situated at a distance from the village.⁷ The *Goṣṭhas* must have been well guarded from the attacks of robbers. (*Paracha*) In the Rgvedic period, the villages were surrounded by corn-fields (*kṣetras*). The fields were owned by the families in separate and well-marked holdings.⁸ The fields were carefully measured off⁹ and the deity presiding over, (*Kṣetrasya pati*) each field is referred to in the Rgveda.¹⁰ On this connection, Macdonell and Keith say "from the evidence that the system of separate holdings already existed in early Vedic times."¹¹

1. *Rv.* I- 44-10; 141-1; 149-4; 146-1 etc.
2. परि त्वासते निधिभिः सखाय कुलपा न व्राजपतिं चरन्तम्। *Rv.* X-179-2.
3. क्षिणावन् ग्रामणीयमेति। *Rv.* X 107-5
4. वामं गृहपतिं नय। *Rv.* VI - 53-2.
5. गृहान् गच्छ गृहपत्नी यथासो। *Rv.* X- 85-26.
6. ते हर्ष्येष्टाः शिशवो न शुभ्रा वत्सासो न प्रक्रीळिनः पयोथाः। *Rv.* VII- 56-16
7. नि गावो गोष्टे असदन्ति मृगासो अविक्षत। *Rv.* I - 191-4.
8. क्षेत्रं न रण्वमूचुषे। *Rv.* X -33-6.
9. क्षेत्रमिव वि मुमुस्ते जनेनाँ एकं पात्रमृभवो जेहमानम्। *Rv.* I - 110-5.
10. *Rv.* IV - 37-1,2; VII - 35-10 etc.
11. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*. Vol I P-211.

The villages were “scattered over the country, some close together, some far apart, and were connected to roads.”¹²

The cows were taken out from the *Goṣṭhas* for pasture in the morning by the *Gopās* (protectors of cows) after the milch-cows had been milked.¹³ In the evening, they were returning to the *Goṣṭhas* and milked again.¹⁴ According to the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*,¹⁵ cows were daily milking three times. Milking in the morning is called *Prātar-doha*, in the forenoon is *Samgava*, and in the evening *Sāyam-doha*. Milk was used thrice daily for offering into *gārhapatya-Agni* (the sacred household Fire). The ears of the cattle were marked to indicate ownership.¹⁶

A Vedic *grāma* was self-contained. The wants of the people, were supplied by the people themselves. They cultivated corns like barley (*yava*),¹⁷ rice (*dhānya*)¹⁸ etc. The grains were stored in granaries (*stivis*).¹⁹

The *Rgvedic* people used to prepare curds, ghee, *dadhya-śira* from the milk.²⁰ Meat also was used for food.²¹ Sheep's wool is spun into yarn and woolen clothes were woven with them. The loon is called *tantra*.²² Each family also wave the cloths required for its

12. Ibid., p-24.

13. इनो विश्वस्य भुवनस्य गोपाः स मा धीरः पाकमत्रा विवेश । *Rv.* I - 164-21.

14. गाव इव ग्रामं यूयुधिरिवाश्वान्वाश्रेव वत्सं सुमना दुहाना । *Rv.* X- 149-4.

15. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, VII - 5-3-1.

16. न ता नशन्ति न दभाति तस्करो नासामामित्रो व्याथिरा दधर्षति । *Rv.* VI-28-3.

17. *Rv.* V-85-3; X- 69-3; 131-2 etc.

18. *Rv.* V-53-13 ; VI - 13-4; X-94- 13 etc.

19. ऊपे यवमिव स्थिविभ्यः । *Rv.* X- 68-3.

20. *Rv.* I-162-13

21. *Rv.* V-27-5

22. सिरीस्तन्त्रं तन्वतो अप्रजन्नयः । *Rv.* X-71-9.

ordinary use and the weaving is usually entrusted to and done by the women.²³ It is distinctly said in one *mantra* that the mother wove cloths for her sons.²⁴ There were men who learnt the art of weaving, took it up as a profession and they were called *Vāya* (weavers).²⁵

The carpenters (*tvaṣṭr* ; *takṣa*)²⁶ were made chariots, wheels, boats, and wooden vessels (*druṇa*). The Smiths (*Karmāra*)²⁷ were made agricultural implements and weapons for war. The potters were making pots and vessels for daily uses. The *Rgveda* mentions *Kalaśa*,²⁸ *Kumbha*,²⁹ *Ukhā*³⁰ etc. The goldsmiths were made gold ornaments like *nikṣa*,³¹ *Kaṇśobhana*,³² *rukma*³³ etc. There were also men whose profession it was to make flower-garlands or wreaths.³⁴ It must have been in great requisition among fashionable and luxurious people.

The skin materials were also manufactured in the Rgvedic age. The tanner is known by the name of *Carmamna*.³⁵ Barbors (*Vaptā*)³⁶ are also mentioned in the *Rgveda*. The physicians (*bhiṣak*)³⁷ claimed a scientific knowledge, so far it went in the Rgvedic days, and he prepared the various herbs and drugs.

23. *Rv.* II - 3-6; 38-4 ; V- 47-6 , etc.

24. अपांसि वस्त्रा पुत्राय मातरो वपन्ति । *Rv.* VI- 47-6.

25. *Rv.* X-26-6 ; 106-1.

26. *Rv.* X-119-5 ; *Rv.* IX - 112 -1.

27. *Rv.* IX - 112-2 ; X - 72-2.

28. *Rv.*I- 117-12 ; iii- 32-15.

29. *Rv.* I - 116-7 ; 117 - 6. etc.

30. *Rv.* I - 162 - 13 ; 15 ; III - 53-22.

31. *Rv.* VIII - 47 - 15 ; 78 - 3.

32. *Rv.* VII-78--3

33. *Rv.* V-53-4;I-166-10 etc.

34. सजं वा दुहितदिवः । *Rv.* VIII - 47 - 15.

35. *Rv.* VIII - 5 - 38

36. शोचिर्वसेव शमशृ वपसि प्र भूम । *Rv.* X- 142-4.

37. कास्त्रहं ततो भिषगुपलप्रक्षिणी नना । *Rv.* IX - 112 - 3.

In the absence of flowing rivers, water was supplied from wells.³⁸ The water was raised from wells by means of a stone-wheel (*aśmacakram*)³⁹ to which pots were attached. There is also a mention of people digging lakes for the purpose of supplying pure drinking water,⁴⁰ as well as natural lakes having full-blown white lotuses on their bosom. (*Puṣkariṇī*).⁴¹ The washing of the clothes was done by the householders themselves, though the work had been strangely ascribed to the god Pūṣan.⁴²

The musicians were also living in the village of the *Rgvedic* country. Some of musical instruments are mentioned in the *Rgveda*. viz., *dundubhi*,⁴³ *Vāṇa*, *Karkai*, *Kṣoṇi*, etc. These instruments were used in the festive occasions as well as in wars. From this account, it shows that a *Rgvedic Grāma* (village) was completely self-continued and supplied all the ordinary wants of its inhabitants.

38. व्रितः कूपोः वहितो देवान्हवत ऊतये । *Rv. I - 105 - 17.*

39. द्रोणाहावमवत मश्मचक्रं सत्रकोशं सिञ्चता नृपाणम् । *Rv. X - 101 - 7.*
X- 93-73.

40. शर्याभिर्भरमाणो गभस्त्योः । *Rv. IX - 110 - 5.*

41. आयने ते परायणे द्रुवा रोहन्तु पुष्णिणीः । हृदयश्च पुण्डरीकणि समुद्रस्य गृहा इमे । *Rv. X-142-8.*

42. आधीषमाणायाः पतिः सुचायाश्च ।
वासोवायोऽवीनामा वाससि मंर्मजत् ॥ *Rv. X- 26-6.*

43. *Rv. I -28-5 ; VI - 47-29, 31 etc.*

Family Life :

The *Rgveda* points to a highly organised society. The foundation of social life was patriarchal family. The father was the head of the family and controlling all the activities of his children, including, in some measure at least, their marriage. The prayers were sent up to the Gods for the birth of children in house and for their long life and prosperity.¹ The sons were coveted not only for the continuity and prolongation of the family line, but also for the spiritual benefit of the dead ancestors who were eager for the oblations offered to them by their lineal descendants.² Some times, when there was no issue, sons were adopted by a stretch of the legal fiction; but no real pleasure was felt in these sons, as there was no blood relation with adoptive parents, and sometimes returned to the original family to which they belonged.³

The ideal son of the seers, is spoken of in the hymn forty-seven of the tenth *mandala*. The sons merits are mentioned in the *Rgveda*.⁴

1. यमश्वी नित्यमुपयाति यज्ञं प्रजावन्तं स्वपत्यं क्षयं नः | स्वजन्मना शेषसा वावृथानम् ॥ *Rv.* VII - 1-12.
यो न वयं सहसावन्मदेमाविक्षितास आयुषा सुवीराः | *Rv.* VII - 1-24.
विश्वा सत्तोसृभयो गृणते च सन्तु यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदानः | *Rv.* VIII - 4- 10.
2. मो षु देवाः अदः स्व ख पादि दिवसहरि ।
मा सोम्यस्य शुंभुवः शूने भूम कदा चन वित्तं मे अस्य रोदसी ॥ *Rv.* I- 105-3.
3. *Rv.* VII-4- 7,8.
परिषद्यं ह्यरण्यस्य रेणकणो नित्यस्य रायः पतयः स्याम ।
न शोषो अग्ने अन्यजातम त्यचेतानास्य मा पथो वि दुक्षः ।
न हि ग्रभायारणः सुशेवोऽन्योदयो मनसा मन्तवा उ ।
अधा चिदोकः पुनरित्स एत्या नो वाज्यभीषालेतु नव्यः ॥
4. *Rv.* X-42-3,4,5.

The seer Dyumna, prayed for a son who would be glorious by defeating his enemies in the battle.⁵ In another place, the seer Śunahotra Bhāradvāja, prayed for a son who would be mighty, delight-giving, performer of sacrifices, and bestower of gifts, and who, riding on a brave steeds, would successfully encounter his enemies riding on brave steeds in battle.⁶ Here, A.C. Das observes “It would appear that the sons were trained up not only to be learned, pious and self-supporting, but also to be brave and heroic men who would be able to hold their own against their enemies.”⁷

The grown-up sons always kept their father’s company, sat with him in his room for receiving instructions.⁸ Sometimes they were sent to the house of a professional preceptor who imparted to them true knowledge with a view to develop their manhood.⁹ In the R̄gvedic times, the father had absolute power over the life and limb of his son, and could inflict on him corporeal punishment even to the extent of maiming or blinding him for serious offences. It is related in the R̄gvedic *mantras*, that the seer Vṛṣā-giri blinded his son R̄jराश्वा for destroying one hundred sheep belonging to their co-villegers, though his eye-sight was afterwards restored through the grace of the Aśvins (*nāsatyas*).¹⁰

5. *Rv.* V- 23- 1,2.

अने सहत्तमा भर द्युम्स्य प्राप्त्वा रयिम् ।
विश्वा यश्चर्षणीरभ्या सा वाजेषु सासहत् ॥
तमग्ने पुतनाषहं रयिं सहस्व आ भर ।
त्वं हि सत्यो अङ्कुतो दाता वाजस्य गोमतः ॥

6. य ओजिष्ठा इन्द्रं तं सु नो दा मदो वृशन्त्स्व भिष्टिर्दास्विम् ।

सौवश्यं यो वनवत्स्वशो वृत्रा समत्सु सासहदमित्रान् ॥ *Rv.* VI-33-1.

7. A.C. Das. *Rgvedic culture*, p - 241.

8. पुरः सदः शर्मसदो न वीरा अनवद्या पतिजुष्टेव नारी । *Rv.* I- 73-3.

9. युवोर्दनाय सुभरा असश्चतो रथमा तस्थुर्वचसं न मन्तवे ।

याभिधियोऽवथः कर्मन्निष्ठये ताभिरु षु ऊतिभिरशिना गतम् ॥ *Rv.* I - 112-2.

10. शातं मेषान्वृक्ये चक्षदानमृजाश्वं तं पिताद्यं चकार ।

तस्मा अक्षी नासत्या विचक्ष आधत्तं दस्ता भिषजावनर्वन् ॥ *Rv.* I - 116 - 16 .

After son's marriage, his wife then became the mistress of the house. The *Vivāha-Sūkta* of the *Rgveda* mentions that the young wife has been enjoined to exercise authority over her husband's father, mother, sisters and brothers.¹¹

The Wife :

The great seer Viśvāmitra declares that 'Jāyedastam,' the wife is the home. In his vision, the wife is true source of domestic felicity.¹² As it was quite natural to attribute the same source of happiness to the gods as to men, it was conjectured that Indra had a happy home, presided over by a good, gracious and loving wife, which rang with the dulcet music of her sweet voice and the merry laughter of the children. The Seer Viśvamitra addresses Indra thus:¹³

"When you have drunk the soma, then, Indra, go home, an auspicious life pleasantly in your dwelling in either case there is the standing in your car or liberating the steeds of provender."

The wife is dressed herself well and gracefully¹⁴ and always put on a smiling countenance with a view to please her husband. She carefully arranged his seat and bed, and looked after his comforts.¹⁵

The wife is not only a loving wife, but a loving mother also. She is fond of her children whom she loved as a mother only could love

11. साम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव सम्राज्ञी श्वश्रां भव ।
ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव सम्राज्ञी आधि देवघु ॥ *Rv.* X- 85- 46.
12. *Rv.* III - 53 - 4.
13. *Rv.* III - 53 - 6.
14. *Rv.* IV - 3 - 2; IV - 58-9.
15. *Rv.* IV- 3-2.

them and nursed and brought them up with great care.¹⁶ The playful and blooming little darlings were formed the chief attraction of the home.¹⁷ The little son caught the hem of his father's garments with a view to attract his attention and press his supplication with earnest and lovable words.¹⁸ The picture of the mother sitting with her little sons on her lap was indeed very lovely, and as well as that of tumbling urchins advancing towards the father with broken and lisping words pleasant to hear.¹⁹ The boys and the girls wore golden ear-rings and bejeweled necklaces.²⁰

The wife is described in the *Rgveda* as the ornaments of the home.²¹ She was an excellent house-wife, rising early with the dawn, and rousing all from sleep, and sending the servants about their respective business.²² She bathed early morning and offered jointly with her husband the morning oblations to the sacred household fire. Another oblation was offered in the mid-day and third in the evening.²³ Her first and foremost duty was to keep the sacred fire burning.

Sometimes the young daughters took charge of the little ones and duly fed and nursed them. After mid-day meals, she used to attend to her toilette, dress herself and the children neatly with a view to meet her husband. She used to prepare meals for the evening, make beds for the children and put them early to sleep.²⁴ Often,

16. *Rv.* VII-81-4.

17. *Rv.* VII-56-16.

18. *Rv.* III-53-2.

19. *Rv.* VII-43-3;VII-103-3.

20. *Rv.* I-122-14.

21. *Rv.*I-66-3.

22. *Rv.* I-124-4.

23. *Rv.* I-173-2;III-28; V-43-15; VIII-1-29; 13-13. etc.

24. *Rv.* I-123-11; 124-7; IV-3-2; 58-9,etc.



she had male and female servants under her, whom she employed in their respective duties and treated kindly.²⁵

She also looked after the cows other domestic animals and supervised the work entrusted to their keepers.²⁶ Occasionally, accompanied by other women, she rambled about and claimed the hills to pluck flowers.²⁷ She was dutiful to her husband's parents, affectionate to her husband's brothers and sisters, and devotedly attached to her husband.²⁸

In the R̄gvedic age domestic felicity was depended upon the mutual harmony of husband and wife and upon their pious performance of the religious duties they owed to the gods.

Saṁskāras in the R̄gveda :

Oldest document of the religious literature of the Indo-Aryans is certainly the *R̄gveda*. Yet, the *R̄gveda* is not complete in itself to provide all details of that aspect. There are a few specific R̄gvedic hymns which are particularly concerned with popular rites and ceremonies. The wedding (*vivāha*),²⁹ the funeral (*Antyeṣṭi*)³⁰ and the conception (*Garbhādhāna*)³¹ are described in the R̄gvedic hymns. The R̄gvedic descriptions may not be ritualistically exact but they are historically accounted for. The later-day *Saṁskāras*, the *Vivāha*, the *Antyeṣṭi* and the *Garbhādhāna* were direct descendants of these hymns. Then, there are those hymns of the *R̄gveda* that are of general

25. *Rv. X-85-43.*

26. *Rv. X-85-44.*

27. *Rv. I-56-2.*

28. *Rv. X-85-46; IV-58-8. etc.*

29. *Rv. X - 85.*

30. *Rv. X- 14, 16, 18.*

31. *Rv. X - 183, 184.*

applicability in the sacramental rituals. They are recited at different occasions, which show that they were not originally composed for a particular *Samiskāra*. But their connection with popular ceremonies cannot be denied altogether. Again, in the *Gṛhyasūtras* many citations homonymous to the Vedic *mantras*. This fact indicates that a large number of the items of the *Samiskāras* were suggested by the Vedic *mantras* in question and they originated in the later Vedic and post-Vedic period.

The *Rgvedic* hymns were composed with the inspirations for invoking the help of gods in events, public and private, that immediately interested the *Rgvedic* people. There are invocations relating to a life of hundred years with children and grand children, securing wives, children³² and other domestic articles,³³ and the destruction of the demon who kills offsprings.³⁴ These and similar references have a great correspondence with the *Samiskāras* that were performed at the various important occasions in the life of a man. Besides, there other references in the *Rgveda* that bear on the social aspects of the *Samiskāras*. For example, it was difficult to secure a husband for a brother less girl. "Like a woman growing old in her parents house."³⁵ Different forms of marriages are also hinted at. viz. *Rākṣasa*, *Brāhma*, *Āsura-vivāha* etc. The *Rgveda* prescribes the time for *Samiskaras*.³⁶ As regards the details and regulations of

32. शतमिन्नु शरदो अन्ति देवा यत्रा नश्चक्रा जरसं तनूनां ।

पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति मा नो मध्यारीरिषतायुर्गन्तोः ॥ *Rv.* I - 89 - 9.

33. पिबसं च तृत्युते चा च गच्छतं प्रजां च दत्तं द्रविणं च दत्तम् । *Rv.* VIII - 35 - 10.

34. *Rv.* X - 162.

35. अमाजूरिव पित्रो सचा सती समानाधा सदसत्वामिये भगम् । *Rv.* II - 17 - 7.

36. आत्मशरीरन्यतरनिष्ठो विहित क्रियाजन्योऽतिशय विशेषः संस्कारः ।

Vīramitrodaya - Samiskāra Prakāśa. Q. Rajbali Pandey, *Hindu Samiskāras*, P - 17.

the *Samiskāras*, it must be confessed that the R̄gvedic hymns do not contain positive rules. They contain many incidental references which throw light on the *Samiskāras*.

The word *Samiskāra* defies every attempt at its correct translation into English. Ceremony or Latin caerimonia does not give the full meaning of this word. The word *Samiskāra* is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘*Sam+skr+ghañ*’ and is used in a variety of ways.

The Hindu *Samiskāras* combine a number of preliminary considerations and rites and other accompanying regulations and observances, all aiming at not only the formal purification of the body but at sanctifying, impressing, refining and perfecting the entire individuality of the recipient. The *Samiskāras* with their paraphernalia were regarded as producing a peculiar indefinable kind of merit for the man who underwent them and the person becomes endowed with a peculiar excellence due to the rites ordained by the *Sāstrās*. It was in this collective sense that the word *Samiskāra* is used. The word ‘*Samiskāra*’ does not occur in the Vedic and *Brāhmaṇa* literature.

The *Gṛhyasūtras* generally deal with the bodily *Samiskāras* beginning with *Vivāha* and ending with *Samāvartana*. They fluctuate from twelve to eighteen and the lists are slightly varying in names of some particular *Samiskāras* or in some additions and omissions. According to the *Paddhatis* and the *Prayogas*, the funeral is always treated separately. The usual number of the *Samiskāras* in them is from ten to thirteen from *Garbhādhāna* to *Vivāha*. Many of the *Paddhatis* are actually called “The *Daśakarma-Paddhatis*.³⁷ At

37. The *Daśakarmapaddatis* of Gaṇapati, Marayana, Pr̄thvidhara, Bherdeva etc.

present, sixteen are the most popular *Samiskāras*, though the enumeration differ in different books.

The *Garbhādhāna* (conception)

Śaunaka gives the definition of the *garbhādhāna* in these words: "the rite by the performance of which a woman receives semen scattered (by her husband) is called *Garbhālambana* or *Garbhādhāna*."³⁸ In the beginning, procreation was a natural act. A human pair copulated, whenever there was a physical demand for it, without any anticipation of progeny, though it was a usual consequence. The *Garbhādhāna Samiskāra*, however, presupposes a well established home, a regular marriage, a desire of possessing children and a religious ideal for which, beneficent gods help men in begetting children.

In the Vedic period, the parental instincts found their expression in many utterance containing prayers for children.³⁹ Heroic sons were regarded as boons conferred by gods on men. The theory of three debts was in the process of evolution in the Vedic period.⁴⁰ A son was called '*Rṇacyuta*'⁴¹ or one who removes debts, which may denote both parental and economic growth, and the begetting of children was regarded a sacred duty binding on every individual. Thus an idea of simple ceremony regarding conception had come into existence in the Vedic period.

38. निशिक्तो यत्रयोगेण गर्भः सन्धायते स्त्रिया । तद् गर्भसम्भनं नाम कर्म प्रोक्तं मनीषिभिः ॥

Vīramitrodaya - Samiskāra Prakāśa. Q. Rajbali Pandey, *Hindu Samiskāras*. p -48.

39. पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति । *Rv. I - 89-9.*

40. जयमानो वै ब्रह्मणस्त्रिभिरुणवान् जायते ब्रह्मचर्येण ऋषिभ्यो यज्ञेन देवेभ्यः प्रजया पितुभ्यः ।

एष वा अनृणो यः पुत्री यज्वा ब्रह्मचारी वा स्यादिति ॥ *Taittiriya samihitā.VI - 3-10-5.*

41. *Rv.X - 142 - 6.*

The ritual procedure adopted in the *Garbhādhāna* had assumed a fairly ceremonious shape before the codification of the *Samīskāras* in the *Gṛhyasūtras*. They do not give an exact information about it in the R̄gvedic period. Yet there are many *mantras* in the *R̄gveda* pointing to the act of conception. The *mantras* describes as follows:⁴²

"May Viṣṇu construct the womb, may Tvaṣṭṛ fabricate the members, may Prajāpati sprinkle the seed, may Dhātṛ cherish your embryo.

Sustain the embryo, *Sinīvāli*, sustain the embryo, Sarasvatī, may the divine Aśvins, garlanded with lotuses, sustain your embryo.

We invoke your embryo which the Aśvins have churned with the golden pieces of touchwood, that you may bring it forth in the tenth month."

The description of actual copulation are also found in the *R̄gveda*. This *mantra* is as under :⁴³

"Pūṣan, inspire her who is most auspicious, in whom men may sow seed, who most affectionate may be devoted to us and in whom animated by dicer we may beget progeny."

In the R̄gvedic period, usually the husband was the natural performer of this *Samīskāra*. But in his absence (dead) substitutes were also allowed. Levirate was current in ancient times, because it

42. *Rv. X- 184 -1,2,3*

विष्णुर्योनि॑ कल्पयतु॒ त्वष्टा॑ रूपाणि॑ पिंशतु॑।
आ॒ सिद्ध्वतु॑ प्रजापतिर्धाता॑ गर्भं॑ ददातु॑ ते॑।
गर्भं॑ देहि॑ सिनीवालि॑ गर्भं॑ देहि॑ सरस्वती॑।
गर्भं॑ ते॑ अश्विनौ॑ देवावा॑ धत्तां॑ पुष्करस्वजा॑।
हिरण्ययी॑ अरणी॑ यं॑ निर्मन्थतो॑ अश्विना॑।
तं॑ ते॑ गर्भं॑ हवामहे॑ दशमे॑ मासि॑ सूतवे॑॥

43. तां॑ पूषन्॑ शिवतमा॑ मेरयस्व॑ यस्यां॑ बीजं॑ मनुष्याः॑ वपन्ति॑।

या॑ न ऊरु॑ उशर्ती॑ विश्रयातो॑ यस्यामुशन्तः॑ प्रहराम॑ शेफम्॑॥ *Rv. X - 85 - 37.*

was necessary to beget children at any cost for the benefit of the family and the dead fathers. The *Rgveda* mentions - 'a widow invites her husband's brother to raise children for her husband.'⁴⁴ Manu⁴⁵ and many other *Smṛtis* allow the widow to bear children from the brother of her husband, a *Sagotra* or a *Brāhmaṇa*.⁴⁶

The *Purṇasava* and the *Śimantonnayana Samskāras* are not found in the R̄gvedic *mantras*.

Jātakarma (Birth ceremonies)

The word 'Janman' occurs thrice in the *Rgveda*.⁴⁷ But it is used in the sense of relation. Besides, the context in which it is used shows that the passages where the word occurs have nothing to do with any ceremony like it. In the *Atharvaveda*, however, there is one full hymn containing prayers and spells for easy and safe delivery. Then, in the *Gṛhyasūtras* this *Samskāra* is fully described.

Nāmakarāṇa (Name-giving) :

The word 'Nāman' is a common occurrence in the Sanskrit literature and is found even in the *Rgveda*,⁴⁸ the earliest work of the Aryans. Names of objects and persons are found in the Vedic literature. Other peculiar names suggested in the *Sūtras* and the *Smṛtis* are also found in the Vedic and *Brāhmaṇa* literature. The *Rgveda* recognizes a secret name, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as well refer to it. But the practice, as given in

44. को वां शयुत्रा विधवेव देवरं मर्य न योषा कृपुते सधस्थ आ । *Rv. X - 40 - 2.*

45. देवराद्वा सपिण्डाद्वा स्त्रिया सम्यङ्गनियुक्तया ।

जेप्सिताधिगन्तण्या सन्तानस्य परीक्षये ॥ *Manusmṛti, IX - 59.*

46. बीजार्थं ब्राह्मणः कश्चिद्द्वनेऽपनिमनक्रयताम् । *Mahābhārata, Ādiparva.*

47. *Rv. VII-33-10;11-26-3.*

48. *Rv. X-35-2;X-71-1. etc.*

the Sutras, of giving a secret name after the *Nakṣatra* name is nowhere instanced in the Vedic literature.

Praises of food are found in the Vedas and *Upaniṣads*, but whether they were sung at an ordinary dinner or on the occasion of the first feeding of the child is doubtful. The ceremony of feeding the child for the first time put on its proper ritualistic garb during the *Sūtra* period.

Almost all the *mantras* that are used in the *Gṛhyasūtras* at the *Chūḍākaraṇa* ceremony are found in the Vedic literature. But, they are all of specific character which show that they were composed for the purpose of cutting the hair only. Wetting the head for tonsure is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.⁴⁹ The shaving razor is praised and requested to be harmless; In the *Yajurveda*, cutting the hair by the father himself for abundance of food, progeny, wealth and strength is also referred to.⁵⁰ Many other mythological allusions to hair-cutting are given in the Vedas. So it is quite clear that the *Chūḍākaraṇa* was a religious ceremony as early as in the Vedic period.

The *Samiskāras* like *Vidyārambha*, *Vedārambha*, *Upanayana*, *Kesānta* and *Samāvartana Samiskāras-* are of course not found in the *Rgveda*, while the *Gṛhyasūtra* deal with them.

The Marriage

It is important to note that even at the R̄gvedic age, the marriage was a fully developed social institution and accepted as such. The marriage was deemed necessary not merely for gratifying the natural

49. *Atharvaveda*, VI-68-1.

50. *Yajurveda*, III-63.

urge but also for setting up a happy home and begetting progeny to continue traditions of religion and culture. The R̄gvedic seers clearly state the purpose and significance of this basic institution.

The aim of marriage as conceived by the R̄gvedic seers is to get a son, who is skilled in activities (*Karmanya*), proficient in house-hold duties (*Sadanya*), performer of sacrifices (*Vidātya*), deserving a position in the assembly of the learned (*Sabheya*), and one who will bring fame to the family (*Pitrśravāṇa*).⁵¹ Further, the R̄gvedic seers urge upon the gods to grant all possible happiness to the married couple.⁵² It is significant that the young couple are advised to cultivate mutual love and confidence so necessary for attaining, maintaining domestic harmony which is the basis of social and national betterment.

However, *R̄gveda* does not mention any reference to the child-marriage. A girl must be fully developed physically in her father's house (*pitrśadam*).⁵³ In the *Vivāha-Sūkta* of *R̄gveda*, "the bride Sūryā became youthful and yearned for a husband," is mentioned.⁵⁴ It shows that in the R̄gvedic period the girls were married long after they had reached puberty.

51. सोमो धेनुं सोमो अर्वन्तमाशुं सोमो वीरं कर्मणं ददाति ।
सादन्यं विदथ्यं सभेयं पितृश्रवणं यो ददाशदस्मै ॥ *Rv.* I-91-20
तन्नस्तुरीपमध्य पोषयिलु देव त्वष्टुर्विं रराणः स्यस्व ।
यतो वीरः कर्मण्यः सुदक्षो युक्तग्रावा जायते देवकामः ॥ *Rv.* III-IV-90

52. या दंपती समनसा सुनुत आ च धावतः ।
देवासो नित्ययाशिरा ॥ *Rv.* VIII-31-5
वीतिहोत्रा कृतद्वसु दशस्यन्तामृताय कम् ।
समूढो रोमशं हतो देवेषु कृणुतो दुवः ॥ *Rv.* VIII-31-9

53. अन्यमिच्छ पितृषदं व्यक्तां स ते भागो जनुषा तस्य विद्धि । *RV.* X-85-21
According to *Sāyaṇa* the word पितृषदं 'means पितृपदं व्याख्यातम् ।'

54. सोमो वधूयुरभवदश्विनास्तामुभा वरा ।
सूर्या यत्पत्ये शंसन्तीं मनसा सविताददात् ॥ *Rv.* X-85-9
पत्ये शंसन्तीं ; explained by *Sāyaṇa* as - पतिं कामयमानं पर्याप्तया युवानाम् ।

The girls had a considerable freedom in the choice of their husbands. A respectable girl always used to select from among her suitors one, whom she really loved, as true love is considered the real basis of happiness.⁵⁵

There are references in the *Rgveda*, to the idea that a bride price to be given was not very desirable to son-in-law. Similarly, dowry was given when the girl had some physical defect.⁵⁶

Forms of the Marriage :

It may be noted that in the R̄gvedic age, several forms of the marriage were developed. One form is usually based on mutual consent, though the final approval of the brother or parents is necessary. The marriage of Sūryā with Soma, as described in the *Vivāha-Sūkta* of the *Rgveda*, is the prototype of the *Brāhma Vivāha*. In the case of the Sūryā's marriage, the Aśvins worked on behalf of Soma.⁵⁷ The *Smṛtis* have regarded it as the most honourable type of marriage. Manu says- "the girl was given by the father, with such ornaments as he could afford, to a man of character and learning, he invited voluntarily and respectfully without taking anything in return."⁵⁸

As it is free from physical force, carnal appetite, impositions of conditions and lure of money. Here, the social decency was fully observed and religious consideration taken into account. This form

55. कियती योषा मर्यतो वश्योः परिप्रीता पन्यसा वार्येण ।

भद्रा वश्यर्भवति यत्सुपेशाः स्वयं सा मित्रं वनुते जने चित् ॥ *Rv.* X-27-12

56. अश्रवं हि भूरिदावत्तरा वां विजामातुरुत वा धा स्यालात् *Rv.* I-109-2

57. यदयातं शुभस्पती वरेयं सूर्यामुप ।

क्वैकं चक्रं वामासील्व देष्ट्राय तस्थतुः ॥ *Rv.* X-85-15

अनृक्षरा ऋजवः सन्तु पन्था येभिः सखायो यन्ति नो वरेयम् ।

समर्यमा सं भगो नो निनियात्सं जास्पत्यं सुयममस्तु देवाः । *Rv.* X-85-23

58. आच्छाद्य चार्चित्वा च श्रुतिशीलवते स्वयम् ।

आहूय दानं कन्याया ब्रह्मो धर्मः प्रकीर्तिः । *Manusmṛti*, III-27

is still current and the most popular in India, though it has been prostituted with the morbid stipulation of dowry.

Another form of marriage i.e., *Rākṣasa* i.e., marriage by stealing or capture was prevalent. But this was not much vogue in the R̄gvedic period. In the instance of the *Rgveda*, the seer Vimada carried off Purumitra's daughter Śundhyu, against Purumitra's will. It is said that the Aśvins conveyed her in their chariot to her husband.⁵⁹ It appears that there was no violence pure, but that the affair was pre-arranged with the consent of the bride who refused to be directed by her parents. This former's consent is a fact which distinguishes such instances of capture and elopment of the bride from *Rākṣasa* method of marriage.

According to Manu "capture of a girl by force while she is crying and weeping, having killed, scattered and injured her relatives is called *Rākṣasa-Vivāha*."⁶⁰ Manu regards the *Rākṣasa* marriage form, commendable for the Kṣatriyas.⁶¹ In the *Mahābhārata*,⁶² Bhiṣma also calls it the best form for the warrior class.

The *Rgveda* traces to the form of 'Gandharva Vivāha' also. In the *Rgveda*, a *mantra* refers that : "You Indra, are manifest, from the time to time you water the earth : Indra pervades all existence : the ancient Indra verily destroys his foe the other does not destroy. The limited two heaven and earth surpass not him who extends beyond the confines of the universe."⁶³

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59. युवं रथेन विमदाय शुन्द्वृवं न्यौहतुः पुरुमित्राय योषणाम् ।
युवं हवं वद्रिमत्या अगच्छतं युवं सुषुतिं चक्रथुः पुरंधये ॥ *Rv.* X-39-7
60. हत्वा छित्वा च भित्वा च क्रोशन्तीं रुदन्तीं गृहात् ।
प्रसह्य कन्यां हरतो राक्षसो विधिरुच्यते ॥ *Manusmṛti*, III-33
61. राक्षसं क्षत्रियस्यैकं । *Manusmṛti*, III-24
62. क्षत्रियाणां तु वीर्येण प्रशस्तं हरणं बलात् । *Mahābhārat*, I-245-6
63. अभूर्वैक्षीवृ आयुरानङ्गर्षन्तु पूर्वो अपरो तु दर्शत् ।
द्वे पवस्ते तं न भूतो यो अस्य पारे रजसो विवेष ॥ *Rv.* X-27-7

A respectable girl always selected from among her suitors one whom she really loved, as true love is considered the real basis of conjugal happiness. A *mantra* in the *Atharvaveda*⁶⁴ shows that parents usually left the daughter free in selection of her lover and directly encouraged her in being forward in love-affairs.

According to Manu "where the bride and the bridegroom meet each other of there own accord and the meeting is consummated in copulation born of passion, that form is called *Gandharva*."⁶⁵ In the *Mahābhārata*, sage Kanva the foster-father of Śakuntalā, says "the marriage of a desiring woman with a desiring man, though without religious ceremonies, is the best marriage."⁶⁶

The Marriage Ceremonies :

According to the *Sarvānukramanī*, the eighty-fifth hymn in the tenth *mandala* of the *R̥gveda*, is considered as a marriage hymn. Here, the whole sense is made as the basis of a metaphoric description in which the heavens take part. However, imaginary the plot may be, it can be safely concluded that the seers largely drew upon the knowledge of the rites, they had from the practical life. The marriage hymn describes the marriage of Sūryā (the daughter of Sūrya), with the Soma.

The marriage customs were almost the same in the R̥gvedic and Atharvavedic periods. But, the Atharvavedic marriage hymns disclose a few changes in the arrangement of the proceedings. Indeed the marriage hymn of the *R̥gveda* (X-85) is taken bodily in the

64. आ नो अने सुमतिं संभलो गमेदिमां कुमारीं सह नो भगेन ।

जुष्टा वरेषु समनेषु वलुरेषां पत्या सौभगमस्वस्यै ॥ *Av.* II-36

65. इच्छायाऽन्योन्य संयोगः कन्यायाश्च वरस्य च ।

गन्धर्वः स तु विजेयो मैथुन्यः कामसम्भवः ॥ *Manusmṛti*, III-32

66. सकामायाः सकामेन निर्मन्त्रः श्रेष्ठ उच्यते । *Mahābhārata*, IV-94-60

Atharvaveda, but with important changes, and it covers the whole *Kanda XIV* of the *Atharvaveda*.

During the *Sūtra* period, every *Grhyasutra* describes the marriage ceremonies in a set order. The *Grhyasutras*, however, differ slightly in the arrangement of their matters and contain a few varying details. Because, every Vedic family had its own *Sūtras*, containing local and tribal differences. But there was no material difference, the religious and the social backgrounds being the same. The *Sūtrakaras* have quoted almost the same Vedic *mantras* and follow the same marriage customs. The marriage ceremonies have developed in the Vedic period, and a few new features are found in the *Grhyasutras*.

The *Antyeṣṭi Samskāra* :

The last sacrament in the life of a Hindu is the *Antyeṣṭi* or the funeral with which he closes the concluding chapter of his worldly career. This *Samskāra*, being post-mortem, is not less important, because for a Hindu the value of the next world is higher than that of the present one. The *Baudhāyana Pitṛmedha Sūtra* says, "It is well known that through the *Samskāras* after the birth one conquers this earth while through the *Samskāras* after the death the heaven."⁶⁷ Therefore, the ritualists are very anxious to have the funerals performed with meticulous care.

The earliest literary text that makes a mention of funeral ceremonies is found in the *Rgveda Samhitā*. The details of the rites may appear like those of the marriage rites, to have differed among different tribes during the time of the *Vedas*. Moreover, the *mantras* of the ceremonies are not arranged in the order of their occurrence

67. जातसंस्कारेणम् लोकमभिजयति मृतसंस्कारेणामुं लोकम्।

Baudhāyana Pitṛmedha Sūtra, III - 1 - 4.

in the *Rgveda*. The fourteen to nineteenth hymns in the tenth *mandals* of the *Rgveda*, are connected with funeral rites. They imply the main incidents of the funeral rite :

- 1) The widow lay down on the funeral pile by the side of her husband.⁶⁸
- 2) The various parts of the dead man's body were directed to go to appropriate places.⁶⁹
- 3) The bones were collected and buried and in some cases a funeral monument was erected.⁷⁰
- 4) A farewell address was presented to the dead.⁷¹
- 5) Then there was feasting and resumption of dancing and laughter.⁷²

Thus the above list shows all the four parts of the complete funeral rite, the burning; the *Abhiṣiñchana* and the *Śmaśāna-chiti* (the washing of the corpse and piling of the funeral pyre); the

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68. इमा नारीरविधवाः सुपलीराज्जनेन सर्पिषा सं विष्टु ।
अनश्रवोऽनमीवाः सुरला आ रोहन्तु जनयो योनिमग्रे । *Rv.* X - 18 - 7.
69. सूर्यं चक्षुर्गच्छतु वातमात्मा ध्यां च गच्छ पृथिवीं च धर्मणा ॥
अपो वा गच्छ यदि तत्र ते हितमोषधीषु प्रति तिष्ठा शरीरैः ॥ *Rv.* X - 16 - 3.
70. उच्छ्वज्ज्वस्व पृथिवी मा नि बाधथाः सूपायनास्मै भव सूपवज्जना ।
माता पुत्रं यथा सिचाभ्येन भूम ऊर्णुहि ॥ *Rv.* X - 18 - 11.
उत्ते स्तभामि पृथिवीं त्वत्परीमं लोगं निदधन्मो अहं रिषम् ।
एतां स्थूणां पितरो धारयन्तु तेऽत्रा यमः सादना ते मिनोतु ॥ *Rv.* X - 18 - 13.
71. *Rv.* X - 14 - 7, 8.
प्रेहि प्रेहि पथिभिः पूर्वेभियत्रा नः पूर्वे पितरः परेयुः ।
उभा राजना स्वधया मदन्ता यमं पञ्चासि वर्त्तनं च देवम् ॥
सं गच्छस्व पितृभिः सं यमेनेष्टापूर्तेन परमे व्योमन् ।
हित्वायावद्यं पुनरस्तमेहि सं गच्छस्व तन्वासुवर्चाः ॥
72. इमे जीवा वि मृतैरावृत्वा न भूद्वद्रा देवहूतिर्नो अघ ।
प्राज्ञो अगाम वृतये हसाय द्राधीय आयुः प्रतरं दधानाः ॥ *Rv.* X - 18 - 3.

Udaka-karma (water oblations); and the *Sāntikarma* (pacificatory rites).

Different kinds of Disposal :

Inhumation or burial proper is almost absent in the present day Hindu funerals, except in cases of great saintly personalities and very small children. But the existence of this custom among common people in the R̄gvedic times is suggested in the few *mantras*. Addressing the dead body carried to and laying in the burial ground, the priest says following R̄gvedic *mantras* :⁷³

"Go to this your mother-earth, the wide-spread, delightful, this virgin earth is as soft as whool, to the liberal worshipper; may she protect you from the proximity of Nirṛti.

Earth, rise up above him; oppress him not; he attentive to him and comfortable; over him up earth, as a mother covers her child with the skirt of her garment. May the earth heaped over him lie light; may thousands of particles of dust envelop him; may these mansions distil ghee for him; may they every day be an asylum to him in this world.

I heap up the earth around you, placing upon you this clod of earth; may I not be injured; may the Pitṛs sustain this your monument; may Yama make you a dwelling here"

73. उप सर्प मातरं भूमिमेतामुरुव्यचसं पृथिवीं सुशोवां।

ऊर्णमृदा युवतीर्दक्षिणावत एषा त्वा पातु निक्रतेरूपसथात् ॥ *Rv. X - 18-10.*

Rv. X - 18 - 11, 12, 13.

उच्छ्वज्यमाना पृथिवीं सु तिष्ठतु सहस्रं मित उप हि श्रयन्ताम् ।

ते गृहासो धृतश्चुतो भवन्तु विश्वाहासमै शरणाः सन्त्वत्र ॥

उत्ते स्तभ्नामि पृथिवीं त्वत्परीमं लोगं निदधन्मो अहं रिषम् ।

एतां स्तूणां पितरो धारयन्तु तेऽत्र यमः सादना ते मिनोतु ॥

Scholars influenced by the later-day custom of cremation and the subsequent burial of the remains, hold that the hymns above refer to the *Asti-saṅcaya* or the collection of bones. According to Śāyaṇa the above *mantras* were uttered at the time when the bones of the dead were put into an urn and buried into a grave. He basis shows the for his opinion on the *Āśvalāyana Grhyasūtra*. But this was a later custom, and should be regarded as a relic of the ancient custom of burial, which was being replaced by the custom of cremation.

In this manner, the R̄gveda remains of historical fact that cremation or burning of the dead body is the most recognised mode of the disposal of corps among the Hindus from the time of the Vedas up to the present day. This mode evolved at a high stage of human civilization, as it is the most scientific and refined.

The custom of cremation a lasting position was the religious belief of the Indo-Aryans that obtained during the R̄gvedic period. Agni was regarded by the R̄gvedic Aryans as the messenger of the gods on earth, and he carries of the oblation offered to them.⁷⁴ The material things that constituted *Havya* could not be bodily and directly conveyed to the gods in heaven; hence the services of a heavenly messenger and carrier like Agni were requisitions. This analogy was also extended to human corpses as well as to the carcasses of the animals that were sacrificed to the gods. After a man died, it was necessary to send his body to heaven. This could be only done by consigning it to Agni. After the body was consumed by it and reduced to ashes, the dead could receive a new body in the world of Yama and join the *Pitaras* and his ancestors.⁷⁵ This

74. वह्निं यशसं विदथस्य केतुं सुप्राप्य दूतं सद्यो अर्थम्। *Rv.* I - 60 - 1.

75. *Rv.* X - 14 - 8.

seems to be the most powerful idea underlaying the custom of cremation, and the idea was essential as religious one.

The Rgvedic Caste System :

Jāti (caste) is one of the most discussed and the most misunderstood and misrepresented social institution of India. There is a real difficulty in the study and discussion of *Jāti*. It is a peculiarly popular institution in the sense that its features evolved, as in case of other social institutions gradually to suit the needs of various groups in society. The various professional groups-carpenters, weavers, artisans, traders, potters, cultivators etc. are mentioned in the *Rgveda*. These groups lived in different parts of the villages and sometimes in separate villages. Thus a common professional and a common residential area seem to have united these families into a single community which gradually acquired its own peculiar custom, mode of behavior, form of worship, rules regarding food and marriage etc. in short, features that could distinguish it from other similar communities. In addition to the fact of living together in a well-defined are, two other factors encouraged the formation of these communities. Firstly, each profession was a family profession in the sense that it was carried on in the home itself, thereby enabling all members of the family to take an active interest in it. Secondly, the profession was heredity. Thus the families following a particular profession for generations, living together in a more or less well-defined area, worshipping a particular god and acquiring their own social and cultural traditions formed a community and when its distinguishing feature came to be birth (*janma*) it acquired the name, *Jāti*. Any individual born in such a community was normally expected and also inclined to follow the profession of his *Jāti*, observe

its rules and regulations regarding regions food, and marriage and thus would himself and the society through his *Jāti*.⁷⁶

The caste-system contributed a good deal to the prosperity of the people and to the progress and continuity of Indian culture as well. Poets, saints, the teachers and social reformers have emphasized and preached from time to time, the unity and universality of life, the essential unity of all beings, the ideal of universal love and brotherhood, the ideas of sacrifice and service and the duties of every one towards family, society and to God, the father of all creation, to whom everything is to be dedicated. The *Rgveda* declares :

"They are brothers, of whom no one is the elder, no one the younger, but who grew up together for their mutual prosperity; may their father, Rudra, ever youthful, the doer of good deeds, and Prṣṇi their mother, easy to be milked, grant favourable days for the sake of the Maruts."⁷⁷

The concept of the all-protecting father was adopted, from the *Rgveda* onwards, in religion, society, politics, education and economic life. The ruler, the teacher, the employer indeed every elderly person is to be regarded as father. There, is thus no room for jealousy or discord in this society based on affection.

The root of the *Varṇa* system is to be found in the ardent desire of the ancient seers to give a meaning and social significance to the functions of each occupational group. For the purpose of the convenience of defining and prescribing the code of conduct, the

76. Cidambra Kulkarni, *Vedic Foundations of Indian Culture*, P. 94.

77. अजयेष्टासो अकनिष्टासे एते सं भातरो वावृद्धुः सौभगाय।

युवा पिता स्वपा रुद्र एषां सुदुधा पृथ्मिः सुदिना मरुद्दः॥ *Rv.* V . 60 - 5

numerous *Jātis* came to be grouped into four *Varṇas* - Brāhmaṇas, Kṣṭriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, on the basis of the nature of their functions. The *Varṇa* system found its full expression in the *Dharma Sūtras* of the Vedic period and it is explained in authoritative and clear terms in the *Smṛtis*. But the references in the *Rgveda* and other Vedic literature clearly indicate the existence of this system even in the earliest period. In the *Rgveda*, the famous *Purusa-sūkta* (X-90)⁷⁸ is usually considered to be the source of the *Varṇa* theory, But it does not say that these were four *Varṇas*.

The word *Varṇa* is originally meant colour and then caste. The *Rgveda* very clearly shows that the caste distinction originated in colour distinction. The R̄gvedic Aryans were a homogeneous people conscious of the unity of their race, religion and culture. The Aryas were white in complexion and their consciousness of it is shown by the use of the word *Śvitnya*⁷⁹ (white complexioned) in describing themselves. Many of their families such as the Vasiṣṭhas and the Tr̄tsus are similarly called *Śvitynca*.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the Dāsas or non-Aryans are often called black (*Kṛṣṇayoni*)⁸¹ or black-skinned (*Kṛṣṇatvac*).⁸² The Aryas made every effort to make their colony of

78. ब्राह्मणो अस्य मुखमासीत् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः।

उरु तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्मभ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥ *Rv.* X - 90- 12

Sāyana on this *mantra* : 'ब्राह्मणत्वः पुरुषः मुखमासीत् सुखद् उत्पन्नः इत्यर्थः। योऽयं राजन्यः क्षात्रियत्वजातिमान् पुरुषः सः बाहूकृतः बाहत्वेन निष्पादितः। बाहुभ्यामुत्पादित इत्यर्थः। तत् इदानीम् अस्य प्रजापतेः यत् यौ उरु तदू वैश्यः सम्पन्नः। उरुभ्यामुत्पन्नः इत्यर्थः तथास्य पद्मयां पादाभ्यां शूद्रः शूद्रत्वं जातिमान् पुरुषः अजायत ।'

79. सनत्क्षेत्रं सखिभिः श्वित्येभिः सनत्सूर्यं सनदपः सुवज्रः। *Rv.* I - 100 - 18.

80. श्वित्यज्यो मा दक्षिणतस्कपर्दी धियंजित्वासो अभिः प्रमन्तुः। *Rv.* VII - 33 - 1 ;VII - 83 - 8.

81. स वृत्रहेन्द्रः कृष्णयोनीः पुरंदरो दासीरैरद्वि। *Rv.* II - 20 - 7.

82. मनवे शासदव्रतान्त्वचं कृष्णामरन्धयत्। *Rv.* I - 130 - 8.

Saptasindhu a purely Aryan territory by driving the Dāsas out of it, and they were successful to a great extent, but when they spread further eastward they found it impossible to get rid of the Dāsas. They, therefore, became more friendly to them and the Āryas and Dāsas became the two sections of the Indian society. Here the caste system had its first origin.

The R̄gvedic society began to comprise two *Varnas*. The white Aryan people came to constitute the *Ārya Varṇa*,⁸³ and the dark Dāsas similarly constitute the *Dāsa Varṇa*.⁸⁴ The *R̄gveda* not only mentions the terms *Ārya-Varṇa* and *Dāsa-Varṇa*, but at one place actually speaks of the great Aryan seer Agastya as protecting 'both the *Varnas*'.⁸⁵ This leaves no room for doubt that in the *R̄gvedic* period there were only two *Varnas* in the Indian society, the Ārya and Dāsas. In this connection P. L. Bhargava says-

"The non-Aryan Dāsas, when admitted into Aryan colonies, began to serve the Āryas and the word *Dāsa*, therefore, acquired the meaning of servant or slave, just as 'slave' in the teutonic language was originally slave. Probably as a result of this meaning being given to the word, the non-Aryans gave up this name and began to be called Śūdras. Except for this change in the nomenclature of the Dāsas, the condition of the Indian society in the later Vedic period was not much different from that at the end of the R̄gvedic period. In the later Vedic literature we here of Āryas and Śūdras as still forming the two sections of the Indian society."⁸⁶

83. हत्वी दस्यूमार्यं वर्णमावत् । *Rv.* III - 34- 9.

84. यो दासं वर्णमधरं गुहाकः । *Rv.* II - 12 - 4.

85. अगस्त्यः खनमानः खनित्रैः प्रजामपत्यं बलमिच्छमानः ।

उभौ वर्णा वृषिरूपाः पुपोष सत्या देवेष्वाशिषो जगाम ॥ *Rv.* I - 179 - 6.

86. P.L. Bhārgava, *India in the Vedic age*. p.281.

So far as the Aryan society of the Vedic age is concerned, there is absolutely no trace of anything even approaching caste system. The common *Aryas* were called *Viś*, which simply meant people.⁸⁷ This meaning survived even in classical Sanskrit in the word *Viśampati*, lord of the people. This *Viś* included men of all professions or ranks except the nobility and priesthood. The most influential *grāmāṇi*⁸⁸ (village head) and the humblest peasant, the soldier, as well as the cowherd, the carpenter and the smith, the tanner and the weaver were all *Viś*.

These people were divided into classes, but not castes and each class was named after the work it had to perform. The *Puruṣa - Sūkta*, emphasises that social harmony is only an aspect of the cosmic harmony. It presupposes that the existence of the four *Varnas*, as references in the other *Sūktas* also show. Here, two relevant *mantras* are below:⁸⁹

“Indra, would you make me a protector of people or would you make me a king ? would you make a sage that has drunk, Soma would you impart to me endless wealth ?”

“O Aśvins, you urge on Brahma, you urge on our thoughts, you kill the evil-spirits and subdue disease;”

87. यच्छिद्वि ते विशे यथा प्रदेव वरुण व्रतम् । *Rv.* I - 25 - 1.

88. सहस्रदा ग्रामणीर्मा स्थिमनुः । *Rv.* X - 62 - 11.

89. इन्द्रो हर्यन्तमर्जुनं वज्रं शुक्रैर्भीवृतम् ।

अपावृणोद्धरिभिरद्विभिः सुतमुद्गा हरिभिरजायत ॥ *Rv.* III - 44 - 5.

ब्रह्म दिव्यतमुत जिन्वतं धियो हतं रक्षांसि सोधतमवीवाः । *Rv.* VIII - 35 - 16 .

क्षत्रं दिव्यतमुत जिन्वतं नृहंत रक्षांसि सोधतमवीवाः । *Rv.* VIII - 35 - 17.

धेनर्जिन्वतमुत जिन्वतं विशो हतं रक्षांसि सेधतमीवाः । *Rv.* VIII - 35-18.

"You urge on *Kṣatra* and also on men, you kill the evil spirits and subdue disease;"

"You urge on the cows also on the *viś*, you kill evil spirits and subdue disease."

Here, clear reference to the class of thinkers and poets, to the class of the brave leaders and to the class of the people producing wealth. But these groups are not castes. They do not indicate their origin to be in birth. They do not indicate their origin to be in birth. They mention only the functions. The prayer cited above suggests the possibility of any one becoming a seer, or a ruler or a wealthy person.

Above the common *Ārya* people two privileged order. The most privileged class comprised the Brāhmaṇas or priests. The term *Brāhmaṇa*, found in many hymns of the *Rgveda*⁹⁰ is probably derived from 'Brahma' meaning a prayer. All those connect with *Brahma* in one way; the other, hymns composition, recitation, meditation, teaching, sacrificing and pressing Soma-plant, formed the *Brāhmaṇa Varṇa*. They were Brāhmaṇas by that function, not by birth. Terms like, *Vipra*, *Kavi*, *Rṣi*, etc. that are used for Brāhmaṇas also emphasise their functions.

In the R̄gvedic period, class of *Brāhmaṇa* was open to every *Ārya* to enter the priestly order. The younger brothers of kings often entered the priestly order, and sometimes even a king would renounce his kingdom and become a *Rṣi*. The most noted example of a king who renounced his kingdom to enter the spiritual order is

90. *Rv.* I - 164 - 45 ; VI - 75-10; VII - 103-1; X-16-6. etc.

of course Viśvāmitra.⁹¹ Of the younger sons kings becoming Brāhmaṇas and founding priestly groups. For example, Devāpi, the brother of king Śantanu became a Brāhmaṇa and was admitted into the Ārṣṭiṣeṇa family of the Bhārgavas.⁹² The descendants of the great seer Bragu were master-carpenters, having been experts in making chariots.⁹³ Even a lady seer like Mudgalā did not hesitate to take up his arms in pursuit of robbers who had stolen cows, and she drove the chariot for her husband and came to his rescue when the situation had become some-what embarrassing for him.⁹⁴ The seers prayed to the Gods for birth of brave and heroic sons who would be able to defeat their enemies in the battle.⁹⁵

In early R̄gvedic period, the Brāhmaṇas commanded the respect of all classes. The supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas over the other classes was gradually acquired by mental, moral and spiritual culture. Whoever attained to a high degree of spiritual culture could become as seer or *Brāhmaṇa* in ancient times.

The word *Kṣatriya* is found in the *R̄gveda*.⁹⁶ It is exclusively connected with royal authority or divine authority. According to Macdonell and Keith,⁹⁷ it included the royal house and the various branches of the royal family. It also included the nobles and their families. *Kṣatra* means valour and *Kṣatriya* was one of the epithets of gods. The great gods Mitra and Varuṇa are called *Kṣatriyas*, or rulars.⁹⁸ During the R̄gvedic age, the class of *Kṣariyas* was also

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91. महां ऋषिदेवजा देवजूतोऽसत्भ्रत्सन्धुमर्णवं नृचक्षाः।
विश्वामित्रो यदवहत्सुदासमप्रियायत कुशिकेभिरिन्द्रः॥ *Rv.* III - 53 - 9.
92. *Rv.* X - 98.
93. एतं वां स्तोममश्विनावकर्मतक्षाम भृगवो न रथम्। *Rv.* X - 39 - 14.
94. रथीरभूमुद्लानी गविष्टे भरे कृतं व्यवेदिन्द्रसेना। *Rv.* X - 102 - 2 .
95. वि तोक अप्सु तनये च सूरेऽर्वाचित्त चर्षणयो विवाचः। *Rv.* VI - 31 - 1 .
96. *Rv.* IV - 12 - 3 ; 42 - 1; V - 69 - 1 ; VII - 64 - 2; etc.
97. Macdonel and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol I. p -203.
98. धृतव्रता क्षत्रिया क्षत्रमाशतुः॥ *Rv.* VIII - 25-8.

formed but it had not yet become a caste. In the case of *Kṣatriyas* too, their functions were more important than birth. *Rājanya* and *Kṣatriya* are identical. In the *Rgveda* there are much instances of *Kṣatriyas* fighting.

The term *Vaiśya* occur only once in the *Rgveda*.⁹⁹ The term *Viś* meaning the group of people is used many times in the *Rgveda*.¹⁰⁰ From the contexts it clearly denotes the common people engaged in agriculture, cattle-breading, crafts, trade and commers. The main function of the *Vaiśya Varṇa* has been to look after the sustenance of other *Varṇas*.

Śūdra is mentioned only once in the *Purusa-sūkta*¹⁰¹ of the *Rgveda*. Scholars think that Śūdra is only another term for *dasyu* and *dāsa* indicating the class of people who did not perform Vedic rituals.¹⁰² But there is evidence to believe that the Śūdras formed a part of vedic society. The *Taittirīya samhitā*¹⁰³ contain the following prayer :

“Bestow light unto our Brāhmaṇas ; bestow light unto our kings; bestow light unto our Vaiśyas; bestow light unto our Śūdras; bestow light unto me by your light (racam).”

This is clear indication of the Śūdras having been a part of the later *Varṇa* system. However, the *Brāhmaṇa* texts use the term in two senses one meaning a class of Śūdras and the others indicating a sinner. For example, the *Brāhmaṇa* father of the Śunaśsepa, who

99. ऊरु तदस्य यद्वैश्यः। *Rv.* X - 90-12.

100. *Rv.* IV - 4-3 ; 37-1 ; V-3-5 ; VI - 21- 4 ; etc.

101. पद्म्यां शूद्रो अजायत। *Rv.* X - 90-12.

102. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol II. P - 388.

103. *Taittirīya samhitā*, V - 7- 6- 3,4.

sold his son and agreed to sacrifice him for money is condemned as a *Sūdra*.¹⁰⁴ All ‘untruth’ is *Sūdra*. As such, *Sūdra* is condemned in the strongest terms. Some scholars who did not care to remember these two different uses of the term *Sūdra*, have misunderstood the meaning of the statement of the *Brāhmaṇas* and misrepresented the whole *Varṇa* system.

Thus clearly shows that Aryan society of the Vedic age had no caste system but was divided into three classes of the priests, rulers, and commoners. With the passing of the time, however this classification became more and more rigid.

Education in the *Rgveda* :

As per the Vedic lores, education in ancient time, was being given to a student after he was initiated with *Upanayana Saṃskāra*. In the *Rgveda*, there is no explicit reference to the ceremony of *Upanayana* (intiation). It is regarded as of such great importance in the later-vedic times. The word *Brahmacārin* occurs in the *Rgveda*, in the sense of a religeous student.¹⁰⁵ Macdonell and Keith observe that “the practice of studentship doubtless developed, and was more strictly regulated by custom as time went on, but it is regularly assumed and discussed in the later Vedic literature, being obviously a necessary part of Vedic society.”¹⁰⁶ In the later Vedic period, however, *Upanayana* ceremony had come into existence and the *Brahmacārins* used to live with his teacher after the ceremony, gathering sacred fuel for fire-worship and bringing alms to the

104. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII.13

ऋतावाना नि षेद्युः साआप्राज्याय सुकृतू।

105. ब्रह्मचारी चरति वेविषद्विषः स देवानां भवत्येतमङ्गम्। *Rv. X -109 - 5.*

106. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II. p-75.

teacher.¹⁰⁷ In this connection it is to be noted - "The *Atharvaveda* has in honour of the *Brahmacārin* hymn (XI-5) which already gives all the characteristic features of religious studentship. The youth is initiated (*upa-nī*) by the teacher into a new life; he wears an antelope skin, and lets his hair grow long; he collects fuel, and begs, learns and practises penance. All these characteristics appear in the later literature. The student lives in the house of his teacher (*ācārya-kula-vāsin*, *ante-vāsin*); he begs, looks after the sacrificial fires and tends the house. His term of studentship might be long extended; it was normally fixed at twelve years, but much longer periods, such a thirty-two years, are mentioned. The age at which studentship began varied... one of the duties of the *Brahmacārin* was chastity."¹⁰⁸

In the *Rgveda*, several terms are used for education viz. *Sikṣate*, *Sikṣti*, *Sikṣasi*, *Sikṣat*, *Sikṣa*, *Sikṣamāṇa*, *Sikṣanara* etc. The Frog-hymn *Mandūka-sūkta* (VII-103) gives a glimpse of the educational system of the R̄gvedic age. The fifth *mantra* of this hymn, gives a picture of the earliest Vedic schools. It compares the croaking of the frogs to the chorus of voices heard, when a teacher recites the *mantra*, section by section (*parvan*), and the pupils repeat his words after him.¹⁰⁹ The first *mantra* of the hymn suggests through a simile that this concerted school-recitation sprang into life suddenly, at a stated time (the opening of the monsoon!), because frogs raising their (rain-inspired voices at the opening of the monsoon after laying low for (the rest of) the year, are compared to Brāhmaṇas, conforming

107. *Atharvaveda*, XI - 5.

108. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol II. pp - 75-76.

109. यदेषामन्यो अन्यस्य वाचं शाक्तस्येव वदति शिक्षमाणः।

सर्वं तदेषां समृथेव पर्वं यत्सुवाचो वदथनाथ्याम् ॥ *Rv.* VII - 103 - 5.

to their fixed annual routine (*Vrata*).¹¹⁰ This clearly means that there were schools already in existence to which a number of students flocked. Evidently the instruction was orally imparted.

The first stage in the teaching was recitation. The teacher would recite *mantras* piece by piece and students would repeat them in the same manner. This was necessary to ensure clear and accurate pronunciation, training of memory and concentration. The next stage was self-study (*svādhyāya*) which includes both study and teaching as well as performance of religious rites.

This is almost the final stage in the education. The oral method of instruction was indeed a direct method employing the question-answers, stories, parables, illustrations easy experiments and such other devices by which the student could be trained to think on right lines. In fact, the system demanded much to be done by the student. The teacher therefore, had to take into consideration the students intellectual capacity, physical ability as well as his willingness, aptitude and interest and accordingly instruct him in the suitable branch of learning. The *Rgveda* points out :¹¹¹

“Friends possessing eyes, possessing ears, were (yet unequal to mental apprehension; some seemed like pools reaching to the mouth, others reaching to the loins, others like pools in which one can bathe.”

Sāyaṇa comments on this *mantra* stating that there were three types of students- the *Mahāprajñā*, the *madhyama prajñā* and the

110. संवत्सरं शशयाना ब्राह्मणा व्रतचारिणः।

वाचं पर्जन्यजिन्तिं प्र मण्डूका अवादिशु ॥ *Rv.* VII - 103 - 1

111. अक्षण्वन्तः कर्णवन्तः सखायो मनोजवेष्वसमा बभूदुः।

आदन्नास उपकक्षास उ त्वे हृदा इव स्नात्वा उ त्वे दद्रशे । *Rv.* X - 71 - 7.

*alpaprajñā.*¹¹² The oral system thus had the peculiar advantage of indicating whether student has really learnt what was taught by the teacher.

Among the subject of study, the Vedic hymns must have occupied the most important place. Another important subject must have been metre. These subjects, who had intended to take up priestly profession must have been required to master the details of rituals associated with the hymns they had memorised. Elementary arithmetic must have been another subject. The elements of geometry necessary to construct the altars of the various sacrifices must have been expounded. The knowledge of elementary astronomy which enabled the Rgvedic people to find out the differences between the lunar and solar years was probably imparted to all. The *Rgveda* not only mentions the twelve months of the year but also the intercalary months.¹¹³ The heroic lore, which developed into *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, and *Nārāśamīśis*, *Gāthās*, must have been another subject of study.¹¹⁴ The knowledge of rivers, mountains and other physical features of Rgvedic territory shown by the *Rṣis* of the *Rgveda* proves that some knowledge of the geography of the motherland was also imparted to students. In the later Vedic period grammar, etymology, phonetics must have been added to the above subjects.¹¹⁵

112. *Sāyana*, X - 71 - 7.

113. वेद मासो धूतव्रतो द्विदश प्रजावतः । वेदा य अजायते । *Rv.* I - 25 - 8.

114. *Atharvaveda*, XV - 6 - 11.

The *Rgveda* mentions, Raibya, the *Nārāśamīśis*, and the *Gāthās*

Rv. रैव्यासीद्नुदेयी नारासंसी च्योचनी ।

सूर्याय भद्रमिद्वासो गाथमौति परिष्कृतम् ॥ *Rv.* x - 85 - 6

115. शिक्षा व्याकरणं छन्दः निरूक्तं ज्योतिषं तथा ।

कल्पश्चति षडङ्गानि ।

Position of Women :

The position of women in the society of the Ṛgvedic age was fairly high. In every sphere of life, they were considered on par with men. The religious or ritual activities had to be completed only in their presence.¹ In this connection the *Rgveda* narrates a story of Br̥haspati, who leaving his wife because of her impertinence, went away for practicing penances.² But, the God explained to him that it was improper to perform penance without wife. The wife is described in the *Rgveda*, as 'the ornament of home',³ and a step ahead, the seer Viśvāmitra establishes identity between the wife and home.⁴ The *Vivāhasūkta* (X-85) of the *Rgveda* describes that the young wife has been enjoined to exercise authority over her husband's father, mother, sisters and brothers. She was likely to be called upon to preside over the household.⁵

During the Ṛgvedic period, women were given sufficient education. They used to participate in philosophical debates like men, which is clear from the *Samvāda-Sūktas* of the *Rgveda*. Like Agastya-Lopāmudrā, Viśvāmitra-Śakti etc. They were also practiced penance. The women seers composed some of the Ṛgvedic *mantras*, or hymns. Such as, Ghoṣā (*Rv.* I-117; X-39-40); Lopāmudrā (*Rv.*I-179), Mamata (*Rv.* VI-10-2), Apāla (*Rv.* VIII-91), Sūrya (*Rv.*-x-85);

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1. या दंपती समनसा सुनुगा आ च धावतः। देवासु नित्ययाशिरा ॥ *Rv.* VIII-31-5
 2. देवा एतस्यामवदन्त पूर्वे सत्प्रकृष्टयः स्तपसे ये निषेदुः।
भीमा जाया ब्राह्मणस्योपनीता दुर्धा दधति परमे व्योमन् ॥ *Rv.* X-109-4
 3. दाधार क्षेममेको न रण्वो। *Rv.* I-66-3
 4. जायेदस्तं मघवन्सेदुः। *Rv.* III-53-4
 5. साम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव साम्राज्ञी श्वश्रां भव ।
ननान्दरी साम्राज्ञी भव साम्राज्ञी अथि देवृषु । *Rv.* X-85-46

Indrāṇī (*Rv.* X-145), Śaci (*Rv.* X-159), Sarparājni (*Rv.* X-189) and Viśvavārā (*Rv.* V-28). The woman seer Viśvavārā not only composed *mantras*, but even performed the functions of a *Rtvik* (priest) at a sacrifice. Apāla composed a hymn in honour of Indra, and offered to him Soma-juice herself. Through the grace of Indra she got cured of her skin-disease for which she had been abandoned by her husband.⁷ Her father's head had become bald, and his corn-fields had lost their productive power. It was through her earnest prayer that Indra pleased to cure him of his baldness, and produce bumper crops in his fields.⁸

Women sometimes used accompany their husbands in the war. Viśpalā, the wife of the king Khela, had lost her leg in a war, and in which place an iron (*āyasi*) one was joined by the grace of the Aśvins.⁹ Mudgalāni or Indrasenā, wife of the sage Mudgala helped her husband in the pursuit of robbers who had stolen their cows, drove the chariot for her husband when he was put in a tight corner; further she taking up husband's bow and arrow, she gave them battle, defeated them and recovered the stolen property.¹⁰ All these

6. एति प्राची विश्ववारा नमोभिर्देवाँ इळाना हविषा धृताची । *Rv.* V-28-1

7. कुविञ्छक लुविल्करकुविन्नो वस्यसस्करत् ।

कुवितपतिद्विषो यतीर्निद्रेण संगमामहै । *Rv.* VIII-91-4

8. *Rv.* VII-91-5,6

इमानि त्रीणी विष्टपा तानिन्द्र वि रोहय ।

शिरस्ततस्योर्वरामादिदं म उपोदरे ॥

असौ च या न उर्वरादिमां तन्वं मम ।

अथो ततस्यच्छिरः सर्वा ता रोमशा कृथि ॥

9. सद्यो जह्या मायसीं विश्पलायै धने हिते सर्तवे प्रत्यदत्तम् । *Rv.* I-116-15

10. *Rv.* X-102-2,9,10,11

रथीरभून्मुद्लानी गविष्टौ भरे कृतं व्यचेदिन्द्रसेना ।

इमं तं पश्य वृषभस्य युज्जं काष्ठाया मध्ये दुगणं शयानम् ।

येन जिगाय शतवत्सहस्रं गवां मुद्लः पृतनाज्येषु ॥

instances show that women played a very important role in the domestic and social life. They were received not only a high intellectual and spiritual, but also a vigorous physical training equally with the men, they were sometimes surpassed in bravery, intelligence and cleverness.

The girls were given in marriages long after they had reached puberty.¹¹ They had considerable freedom in choosing of their bridegrooms.¹² The dowry was not generally approved in the R̄gvedic society. Similarly, dowry was given when the girl had some physical defect.¹³

The aim of marriage was to continue the progeny.¹⁴ The marriage was a sacred bond which could not be broken by any human action. The monogamy was the usual rule in the R̄gvedic society.¹⁵ The polygamy was existed but amongst the kings and chiefs.¹⁶ The polyandry not allowed in that period. The widows were allowed to remarry particularly when they were without a child.¹⁷

आरे अधा को चिता ददर्श यं युज्जन्ति तम्वा स्थापयन्ति
नास्मौ तुणं नोदकमा भरन्त्युत्तरो धुरो वहति प्रदेविष्ट् ॥
परिवृक्तेव पतिविद्यमानट् पीप्यान कूचक्रेणेव सिज्यन् ॥
एषैष्या चिद्रथ्या जयेम सुमङ्गलम् सिनवदस्तु सातम् ॥

11. अम्ममिछ्छ पितृषदं व्यक्तां स ते भागो जनुषा तस्य विद्धि ॥ *Rv. X-85-21*
12. कियती योषा मर्यतो वश्वूयोः परिप्रीता पन्यसा वार्येण ।
भद्रा वधूर्भवती यत्सुपेश्वासः स्वयं सा मित्रं वनुते जनेचित् ॥ *Rv. X-27-12*
13. प्र श्मशु दोषुवदूर्धर्था भूद्वि सेनाभिर्दयमानो वि राधस्य । *Rv. X-23-1*
14. यतो वीरा कर्मव्यः सुदक्षो युक्तग्रावा जायते देवकामः । *Rv. III-4-9*
15. ते जायेव पत्य उशती सुवासाः । *Rv. IV-3-2*
जनीरिव पतितेकः समानो । *Rv. VII-26-3*
16. सं मा तपन्त्यभितः सपलीरिव पर्शवः । *Rv. I-105-8*
17. को वां शयुत्रा विधवेव देवरं मर्य न योषा कृणुते सथस्या उप । *Rv. X-40-2*

The childless widow inherited her husband's property as matter of right.¹⁸ The unmarried daughter lived with her parents in her parent's house. She is called *amājur*. Sometimes she used to demand and got a share of the ancestral property for her maintenance.¹⁹ But, generally she could not claim any share with her brothers.²⁰

The women were not to remain behind four wall of the house, but moved about freely. They were attending feasts and dances, as referred to in fair ladies flocking to festive gathering.²¹ From the brief account above, it would be clear that the position of the women in the R̄gvedic society was high and honourable.

- 18 .परिवृक्तेव पतिविद्यमानद् पीप्यान कूचक्रेणेव सिज्जन्।
एषैष्या चिद्रथ्या जयेम सुमङ्गलं सिनवदस्तु सातम्॥ *Rv.* X-102-11
19. अमाजूरिव पित्रोः सचा सतीं समानादा सदस्त्वामीये भगम्।
कृथि प्रकेतमुप मास्या भर दद्धि भागं तन्वो येन मामहः॥ *Rv.* II-17-7
20. न जायेम तान्वो रिकथमारैक्यकार गर्भं सानितुर्निधानम्॥ *Rv.* III-31-2
21. भुरन्तु नो यशसः सोत्वन्धसो ग्रावाणो वाचा दिविता दिवित्मता।
नरो यत्र दुहते काम्यं यद्ध्वाघोषयन्तो अभितो मिथस्तुरः॥ *Rv.* X-77-6

Dress and Decorations:

During the R̄gvedic age, the peoples had learnt the process of manufacturing clothes from sheep's wool. Their garments mainly consisted of woolen clothes, showing that the climate was still very cold and necessitated the use of warm clothing. *Vāsas*¹ is the most usual word for clothes in the *R̄gveda*. The god Pūṣan is called "a weaver of garments" (*vāso-vāya*).² Urṇa (wool) is very frequently mentioned in the *R̄gveda*. The bank of the river Paruṣṇī (Rāvi)³ is famous for wool, as Gandhāra⁴ was famous for its sheep. The Sindhu country is called *Suvāsa* (the producers of beautiful cloths) and Urṇāvatī (the producer of wool).⁵ The dress consisted of two garments; the *Vāsas* is lower garment and *adhivāsa*⁶ is an upper garment. The *adhivāsa* sometimes refers to the *adhivastra*.⁷

Besides these a mantle or cloak called *atka*⁸ and *drāpi*⁹ are also mentioned. The garments were some times embroidered and the Maruts are described as wearing mantles adorned with gold.¹⁰

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1. वासोवायोऽविनामा वासांसि मर्मजत् । *Rv.* X-26-6
Rv. I-34-1 ; 115-4; 162-16; VII-3-24 etc.
 2. अधीषमाणायाः पतिः शुचायाश्च शुचस्य च ।
वासोवायोऽविनामा वासांसिमार्मजत् ॥ *Rv.* X-26-6
 3. श्रीये परूष्णीमुषमाण उर्णा यस्याः पर्वाणि सख्याय विव्ये । *Rv.* IV-22-2
 4. सर्वाहमस्मी रोमशा गन्धारीणामिवाविका । *Rv.* I-126-7
 5. स्वश्वा सिन्धुः सुरथा सुवासा हिरण्ययो सुकृता वाजिनीवती ।
उर्णावती युवतिः सीलमावत्युताधि वस्ते सुभगा मधुवृद्धम् ॥ *Rv.* X-75-8
 6. यदश्वाय वास उपस्तुण्नि अधीवासं या हिरण्यान्यस्मै । *Rv.* I-163-16
I-140-9 ; X-5-4
 7. यो वां यज्ञेभिरावृतोऽधिवस्त्र वधूरिव । *Rv.* VII-26-13
 8. उच्छुकमत्कमजते सिमस्मान्नवा यातुभ्यो वसना जहाति । *Rv.* I-95-7
 9. भिप्रद्रापिं हिरण्ययं वरुणो वस्त निर्णिजम् । *Rv.* I-25-13
 10. यदश्वान्धूर्षु पृष्ठतीरयुग्धं हिरण्ययान्नत्यल्कां अमुग्वहम् ।
विश्वा इत्सप्रधो मरुतो व्यस्यथ शुभं यातमनु रथा अवृत्सथ । *Rv.* V-55-6

A kind of embroidered garment *peśas*¹¹ such as female-dancers would wear. A special garment called *Vādhūya*¹² is weaved for uses of the bride at the marriage ceremony. In the Rgvedic age the skin was also used for the garments. The Maruts are described as wearing deer-skins.¹³ In a *Vālakhilya* hymn, the seer Krśa says that king Praskaṇva, for giving him a "hundred dressed hides".¹⁴ It is shown that the skins of animals were used for clothing by the primitive inhabitants.

The men and women were found of using ornaments in the Rgvedic times. *Niṣka*¹⁵ is a golden ornament worn on the neck, as is shown by the epithet *niṣka-grīva*.¹⁶ *Rukma*¹⁷ is another golden ornament in the shape of a plate, worn on the chest which is widened by the term *Rukma Vakṣas*.¹⁷ The god Maruts are described as decorated with *rukma*¹⁹ which suggests that it is for the males. Pearl ornaments were being used, which however is suggestive of *Kṛśana*.²⁰ The pearls must have been available in large quantities in the *Sapt-sindhu* region. Because the river Sindhu is called *Hiranya vartini*.²¹ Besides it is mentioned that pearls were used to adorn the chariot of

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11. अथि पेशांसि वपते। *Rv. I-92-4*
 12. सूर्या यो ब्रह्मा विद्यात्स इद्वाधूयमर्हति *Rv. X-85-34*
 13. अंसेष्वेताः पविषु क्षुरा अथि वयो न पक्षान्व्यनु श्रियो धिरे। *Rv. I-166-10*
 14. शतं चर्मणि म्लातानि *Rv. VIII-55-3*
 15. निष्कं वा घा कृणवते। *Rv. VIII-47-15*
 16. निष्कग्रीवो बृहदुक्थ एना मध्वा न वाजयुः। *Rv. V-19-3*
 17. स्वशु रूक्मेषु स्यादिषु। *Rv. V-53-4*
I-166-10; 4-10-5; VIII-20-11 etc.
 18. ब्रहद्यो दधिरे रुक्मवक्षसः। *Rv. V-55-6*
II-34-8; V-57-5
 19. वक्षः सु रुक्मा मरुतो रथे शुभः। *Rv. V-54-11*
 20. अभीवृतं कृशनैर्विश्वरूपं। *Rv. I-35-4*
 21. *Rv. VI-61-7*

Savitr,²² the horse fastened to it.²³ The *Srak*²⁴ is a garland, ordinarily worn by men and made either of flowers or golden lace wrought in to flowers. The makers of the *niṣka* and of the garland are mentioned in the same *mantra*.²⁵ The *khādi* is either a golden anklet worn both by men and women, or an armlet worn on the arm or wrist like a bangle. It sometimes signifies a ring on the hand (*Khādihasta*).²⁶ The golden ornaments for the ear were called *Karṇaśobhana*.²⁷ Besides, the *Rgveda* refers to the epithet *maṇi-grīva*²⁸ which was worn round the neck. Another *mantra* states that the followers of Vṛatra were adorning the jewels.²⁹ *Rgveda* also speaks that brides had much liking for ornaments given by their parents.³⁰

In the Rgvedic time, women had their hair well oiled and combed, and dressed in braids (*Kaparda*). They had the practice of weaving braid into four braids which dangled behind on the back.³¹ The men also had their long or short, according to their will. The Vasiṭas had long hair which was coiled on the right.³² The *Vaptr*³³ in the *Rigveda* denotes a barber shaving beards. The *kṣura*³⁴ is used for razor or blade.

22. अभीवृतं कृशनैविश्वरूपं हिरण्यशम्यो यजतो बृहन्तम् ।
अस्थाद्रथं सविता चित्रभानुः कृष्णा रजांसि तविषीं दधानः ॥ *Rv.* I-35-4
23. अभीयस्येव घोषाः । *Rv.* X-68-1
24. स्वजं क्रण्वानु जन्म्यो । *Rv.* IV-38-6
25. निष्कं वा धा कृणवतो स्वजं वा दुहितार्दिवः *Rv.* VII-47-15
26. त्वेशं गणं तवसं खदिहस्तं । *Rv.* V-58-2
27. उत नः कर्णशोभना पुरुणि धृष्णवा भर । *Rv.* VII-78-3
28. हिरण्यकर्ण मणिग्रीवमर्ण स्तन्नो । *Rv.* I-122-16
29. चक्राणासः परिणहं पृथिव्या हिरण्येन शुभ्मानाः । *Rv.* I-33-8
30. परिष्कृतसह इन्द्रवहो योषेविह पित्र्यांवती । *Rv.* IX-46-2
31. चतुष्कपर्दा युवतिः सुपेशा धृतप्रतीका वयुनानि वस्ते । *Rv.* X-114-2
32. श्विन्यज्ञोमा दक्षिणतस्कपर्दा द्वादवितवे वसिष्ठाः ॥ *Rv.* VII-33-1
33. शोचिर्वसेव शमश्च वपसि प्र भूम । *Rv.* X-142-4
34. क्षुरं रास्व रायो विमोचन । *Rv.* VII-4-16

Food and Drinks :

Yava is frequently mentioned in the R̄gvedic *mantras*¹ it was regularly grown in that period and had become their principal food-grain. The words *Dhānya*² and *Dhānā*³ occur in the sense of "grains of corn". The word *vriñhi* (rice) does not occur in the *R̄gveda* but the word *Dhānya* makes up for its absence.⁴ These two kinds of grains (*Yava* and *Dhānya*) were the important food grains.

Preparation of Foods :

In the R̄gvedic times, the principal food was prepared from barley. The *Karambha*⁵ was prepared from parched barley, mixed with curd or ghee. It was offered to Pūṣan.⁶ *Apūpa* was a sweetened cake made by barley with fried in the ghee. *Odana*⁷ was a name for a mess, usually of grain cooked with milk. This is exemplified by a rigvedic mention of *kṣirodana*.⁸ *Saktu*⁹ mentioned as usual malt being preparation, and it was well purified by a sieve. *Pakti*¹⁰ was the name

1. *Rv.* I-23-15; 135-8; II-5-6; 14-11; V-85-3 etc.
2. येन तोकाय तनयाय थान्यं बीजं वहद्वे अक्षितम्। *Rv.* V-53-15
Rv. IV-13-4; X-94-16
3. भोद्धस्मिन्न्यक्तिः पच्यते सन्ति धानाः। *Rv.* VI-29-4
I-16-2 ; III-35-3; 52-5
4. A.C. Das R̄gvedic Culture, P.201
5. य एनमदिदेशति करम्भादिति पूषणम्। *Rv.* VI-56-1
I-187-16 ; III-57-7; VIII-102-2
6. अपूर्णं देव घृतवन्तमग्ने। *Rv.* X-45-9
7. ओदनं पच्यमानं पुरो गिरा। *Rv.* VIII-69-7
8. शतं महिषास्त्रीरपाकमोदनं वराहमिद्रे एवमुषम्। *Rv.* VIII-77-10
9. सकुमिव तिरुनाः पुनन्तो यत्र धीरा मनसा वाचमक्रत। *Rv.* X-71-2
10. आदित्यक्तिः पुरोळाशं रिरिच्यात्। *Rv.* IV-24-7

for a kind of cake. It was used of the *Purodāśa*, which was used as a ritual offerings. Cooked food is called *pakva*.¹¹

The R̄gvedic references tell that milk and it's various products were used as food during that period. *Payas* or *Kṣīra*, *Dadhi*, *Gṛta*, are repeatedly mentioned in the *R̄gveda*. These three kinds of food are the products of milk given by cows.¹² The *kṣīrodana* was a favourite dish. *Dadhi* stands for sour milk and curd. *Dadhyāśīra* is used for it's mixture with the Soma.¹³ *Gṛta* is used in the sacrifice hence Agni is called *Gṛata-pratīka*,¹⁴ *Gṛta-pṛṣṭha*¹⁵ and *Gṛta-prasatta*.¹⁶

Fruits of some sorts were obviously known in the *R̄gveda*. The *Urvāruka*,¹⁷ *Karkandhu*,¹⁸ and the *Pippala*¹⁹ which were found in forests. *Madhu* was also used with food and drinks. It is mentioned frequently in the *R̄gveda*.²⁰ Also the flesh (*māṁsa*) was a regular food of the rgvedic peoples. Goats, sheep, and buffaloes were slaughtered for food and at sacrifices and their flesh was being offered

11. सुमीळ्हे शतं पेरुके च पक्वा । *Rv.* VI-63-9
12. त्रिधातु गा अधि जयासि । *Rv.* VI-32-5
13. सोमासो दद्याशिरः । *Rv.* I-55-5
I-137-2 ; V-51-7
14. धृतप्रतीकं व ऋतस्य धूर्षमग्निं । *Rv.* I-143-7
15. शुचिं पावकं धृतप्रष्टमग्निम् । *Rv.* V-4-3
16. धृतप्रसत्तो असुरः सुशेवो रायो धर्ता धरुणो वस्वो अग्निः । *Rv.* V-15-1
17. उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनात्-मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतम् । *Rv.* VII-59-12
18. याभिः कर्कन्धुं वयं च । *Rv.* I-112-6
19. तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु । *Rv.* I-164-20
20. वनस्पते मधुना दैवेन । *Rv.* III-8-1
I-19-9 ; 154-4; II-19-2 etc.
21. अक्षन्नाय वाशान्नाय सोमपृष्टाय वेद्यसे । स्तोमैर्विदेमाने । *Rv.* VIII-43-11

to the gods. "Agni is described as eater of ox and cow" in the *Rgveda*.²¹ Bulls were used in the sacrifice for Indra, who was fond of cooked flesh.²² The *Rgveda* refers to fixed places at which 'slaughtering of bulls' and cows used to take place.²³ Buffaloes were also sacrificed to Indra, and flesh of which cooked was and partaken of by his votaries. The number of these victims sometimes varied from hundred to three hundred. One reference speaks that the roasted and boiled flesh were offered to the gods.²⁵ The accounts above, show that the rgvedic people had no objection to take beef.

In this connection, A.C. Das thinks - "considering the fact that they had been a pastoral people before they settled down as agriculturists. And that the climate was extremely cold in rgvedic times, as the year was called *Hima* on account of predominance year (*Rv.I-64.10.etc*), one need not be surprised that flesh of animals formed a principal item of their food."²⁶

The principal drinks of the Rgvedic people was soma juice the soma plant was grown on the mount Mūjavata²⁷ (Hindukush) and on the bank of river Gouri.²⁸ The leaves of Soma plant were collected and pounded with stones called *grava*²⁹ or *adri*.³⁰ Then the women

22. अमा ते मुप्रं वृषभं पचानि । *Rv. X-27-2*
23. यो अक्षेणेव चक्रिया शर्चीभिर्विश्वक्तस्तम्भ पृथीवीमुत्याम् *Rv. X-89-14*
24. सखा सख्ये अपचन्त्वयमग्निरस्य कृत्वा महिषा त्री शतानि । *Rv. V-29-7*
V-29-8 ; VI-17-11
25. यन्नीक्षणं मंस्पचन्या उखाया या पात्राणि यूष्ण आसेचतानि *Rv. I-162-13*
मेघं शृतपाकं पचन्तु । *Rv. I-162-10*
26. A.C. Das, *Rgvedic Culture*, p.203
27. सोमस्येव मोजवतस्य । *Rv. X-34-1*
28. सोमो गौरी अधिक्षितः । *Rv. IX-12-3*
29. ग्रावायत्र वदन्ति करुकक्य । *Rv. I-83-7*
30. पिदा सोममिन्द्र सुवानमद्रिभिः *Rv. I-130-2*

used to squeeze the juice out, with their fingers.³¹ Afterwards mixed milk, water and strained through a sieve made of sheep's wool. It is placed over a pot (Kalaśa). Thus, strained and purified, the juice was mixed with milk or curd and sometimes honey.³² It is a favourite drink of the gods as well as of their votaries. In the ninth *mandala* of *Rgveda* all hymns are in praise of Soma. Soma is described as *Babhu*, *Hari* (tawny)³³ and *aruṇa* (ruddy).³⁴ In taste, it is *Svādu* (savory), *Madhumān* (sweet), *Tīvra* (Pungent) and *Rasavān* (full of flavor).³⁵ Śukra or Śuci is a type of soma drink, when it is not mixed with anything.³⁶

Another type of drink, sura is also mentioned in the *Rgveda*. It is an intoxicating drink hence it's drinking is condemned in the *Rgveda*, as under its influence. Men committed sins and crimes. It has been classed with dicing as an evil. It was usually kept in *dṛti* (skin-vessels).³⁷ In the Rgvedic period, the *gavāśira*, *dadyāśira* and *yavāśira* were used as drinks, are quite famous.³⁸ In the post Vedic period the most well known drink offered to honorable guests was *Madhuparka*, which is a combination of curd, water, honey, sugar and ghee.

31. ककुहः सोम्यो रस इन्दुरिन्द्राय पूर्व्यः। *Rv.* IX-67-8

32. हिन्वन्ति सूरमुखयः पवमानं मधुश्चुतं। *Rv.* IX-67-9

33. एते असुग्रमाशबोऽति ह्वरांसि ब्रह्मवः। *Rv.* IX-63-4

34. उत त्वामरुणं वयं गोभिरज्ज्मो मदया कम्। *Rv.* IX-45-3

35. स्वादुष्किलायां मधुमाँ ऊतयां तीव्रः किलाया रसवां ऊतायाम्। *Rv.* VI-47-1

36. शुक्रा आशिरं याचन्ते। *Rv.* VIII-2-10

शुचिरसि परुनिष्टः क्षीरमध्यत आशीर्तः *Rv.* VIII-2-9

37. न स स्वो दक्षो वरुणा श्रतिः सा सुरा मन्युर्विभीदको अचित्तिः।

अस्ति जायान्कनीय स उपारे स्वप्रश्चनेदनृततस्य प्रयोता॥ *Rv.* VIII-86-6

38. अश्वमेधस्य दानाः सोमा इव ऋयाशिरः। *Rv.* V-27-5

8. Political and Legal Institutions in the Rgvedic Age

i. Rgvedic Polity :

The *Rgveda* throw considerable light on the political and legal institutions of that age. The word *Rāṣṭra* is mentioned in the *Rgveda*.¹ *Rāṣṭra* means a kingdom or a state. It is a union of villages and towns. The word *Rāṣṭra* which is several times mentioned in the *Rgveda*, shows that the region occupied by the Rgvedic people was divided into a number of kingdoms (*Rāṣṭra*), and each *Rāṣṭra* was ruled by a king (*Rājan*).² The following Rgvedic *mantras* gives an idea of the *Rāṣṭra*.³

"Where light is perpetual, in the world in which the Sun is placed in that immortal imperishable world place me Pavamāna; flow, Indu, for Indra.

Where Vaivasvata's son is king, where the inner chamber of the Sun is, where these great waters are, there make me immortal; flow, Indu, for Indra."

Thus, the Rgvedic seers give a clear idea of the *Rāṣṭra*.

The *Yajurveda* clearly mentions the germs of the later *Saptāṅga* theory of the state.⁴ The king, the *rāṣṭrabṛhmaṇi*, people, cattle, villages, and force are mentioned but only *Durga* (fort) and *Mitra* (allay) are not mentioned. The *Bhūmi-Sūkta* of the *Atharvaveda*⁵ gives a very elaborate account of the natural resources.

1. *Rv.* IV-42-1; VII-34-11; 84-2; X-109-3; 124-4, etc

2. *Rv.* III-43-5 ; V-54-7 etc.

3. यत्र ज्योतिरजस्तं यस्मिन्लोके स्वर्हितम् ।

तस्मिमां धेहि पवमानामृते लोके अक्षित इन्द्रायेन्द्रो परि स्वत ॥

यत्र राजा वैवस्वतो यत्रावरोधनं दिवः ।

यत्रामूर्यहृतीरापस्तत्र माममृतं कृषीन्द्रायेन्द्रो परि स्वत ॥ *Rv* IX-113-7,8

4. *Yajurveda*, III-4-8

5. *Atharvaveda*, XIII-1-8 to 10

The Vedic thinkers had a correct idea of *Rāstra*, as a political unit is most convincingly conveyed by an interesting reference to it by Yāska in his *Nirukta*. He explains that men individually are many, but as *Rāstra*, they are one. He clearly states that *Rāstra* is created by two factors:⁶

- 1) *Sastānaikatva* - unity born of residing in the same region
- 2) *Sambhogaiatva* - the community of interests and enjoyments.

The *Rājan* was the symbol of harmony of all the people and the elements and interesting of the state. The term *Rājan* is repeatedly occurring in the *Rgveda*.⁷ He is entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the state and of enhancing its prosperity. The word Rājan, used so often in the *Rgveda*, means sometimes a noble and generally a king. The seer Sobhari Kāṇva remarks in a *mantra* of the *Rgveda* as below:

“King Citra who gave thousands and ten thousands (gifts) is the only king, others are only small chiefs along bank of the Sarasvatī.”⁸

The two characteristic features, wealth and liberality specifically mentioned are here to denote the monarch. Further, the king is distinguished from the emperor or universal ruler, by terms *Sāmrāja*,⁹ *ekarāja*,¹⁰ *adhirāja*,¹¹ and the phrase, *Viśvasya bhuvanasya rāja* (the ruler of the wide universe).¹² The meaning of

6. G.T.Deshpande, A Reference to *Rāstra* in *Nirukta*, Nagpur University Journal, No. 16, p-126

7. *Rv.* III-43-5; V-54-7

8. चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु।

पर्जन्य इव ततनदि वृष्ट्या सहस्रमयुता ददत् ॥ *Rv.* VIII-21-18

9. द्विमाता होता विदथेषु साम्राज्यव्यग्रं चरति क्षेति बुधः ॥ *Rv.* III-55-7

10. एकाराज्य भुवनस्य राजसी शचीपत इन्द्र विश्वरूपतिभिः ॥ *Rv.* VII-37-3

11. वसवो रुद्रा आदित्या उपरिस्पृशं मोग्रं चेत्तारमधिराजमक्रन् ॥ *Rv.* X-128-9

12. *Rv.* VII-37-3

these terms is clear in the *Atharvaveda* - "May you shine forth as the sole ruler (*ekarāja*)"¹³ and "May he shine as the overlord of kings (*adhirāja*)."¹⁴ In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,¹⁵ the distinction between a king and an emperor is clearly made; 'By offering the *Rajasūya* he becomes a king and by offering *Vājapeya* he becomes an emperor; the office of the king is lower and that of the emperor is higher'. Besides, 'Sārvabhauma' and 'Cakravartin' are the other two terms used for emperor.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁶ mentions, several terms denoting grades of sovereignty such as *Sāmrājya*, *Baujya*, *Svarājya*, *Vairājya*, *Pārameśṭhya*, *Rājya*, *Mahārājya*, *Adhirājya*, *Ekarāt*, etc. In this passage, the meaning of the terms *Baujya*, *Vairājya*, and *Pārameśṭhya* is not clear. P.V.Kane¹⁷ suggests that '*Svarājya*' means Supreme-eminence, '*Pārameśṭhya*' means godlike power. He also points out that '*Svarājya*' in the *Rgveda* means "an all-embracing sovereignty which will offered protection to many."¹⁸ It is clear from those passages that the ideal of suzerainty extending over many kingdoms was known during the Vedic period.

There is no doubt that the ruler was well-established in the R̄gvedic age. He was surrounded by pomp and majesty. He wore a gorgeous robe and lived in the palace with a thousand pillars and thousand portals.¹⁹ He occupied a position of high dignity and

13. *Athrvaveda*, III-4-1

14. Ibid, VI-98-1

15. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V-I-1-13

16. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 39-1

17. P.V. Kane : *History of Dharma Śastra*, Bhandarkar oriental Research Institute, Poona, Vol.III, p.66

18. व्यचिष्ठे बहुपाये यतेमहि स्वराज्ये ॥ *Rv.* V-66-6

19. राजानावनभिदुहा श्रुवे समस्युत्तमे । सहस्रस्थूणा आसाते ॥ *Rv.* II-41-5

supremacy which was emphasized by a formal consecration and laudatory hymns.²⁰ The *Rgveda* leaves no doubt that the king was no longer a leader of a primitive tribe but was the symbol of unity and harmony, as also the guardian of a civilized community.²¹ The possession of considerable wealth by some of the kings (rulers) is also proved by the fact that according to some of the *Dānastutis* the presents conferred by kings on their priests were exceedingly bountiful and varied.

The line of kingly succession found in the *Rgveda*, show that kingship was hereditary and the law of primogeniture was normally followed. For example, family line of Divodāsa is as follows:²² Vadhryaśva>Divodāsa>Paijavana>Sudās.

The protection of the people was the sacred duty of the king and he is emphatically called the protector of the people (*gopā janasya*).²³ The ruler is invested with divine qualities. In this context, it is necessary to mention that a hymn of the *Rgveda*, attributed to king Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa is cited as an instance of how kings claimed divine right. But a careful consideration of the hymn shows that it is wrongly interpreted. The hymn reads like this;

“I am Kṣatriya, Ruler of Universe, Ruler of two worlds (earth and heaven), Ruler, Varuṇa, to execute whose purpose the gods

20. आ त्वार्हमन्तरेधि द्वृवस्तिष्ठाविचाचलिः।

विशस्त्वा सर्वा वाज्वनु मा त्वद्राष्ट्रमधि भ्रशत्॥

इहैवेधि माप च्योष्टः पर्वत इवाविचाचलिः।

इन्द्रिइवेह द्वृवस्तिष्ठेह राष्ट्रमु धारय॥ *Rv.* X-173-1,2

21. पूषा राजानमाघृणिरपूर्वं गुहा हितम् । अविन्दच्यत्रबहिषम् ॥ *Rv.* I-23-14

22. इमं नरो मरुतः सश्चतानु दिवोदासं न पितरं सुदासः।

अविष्ट्वा पैजवनस्य केतं दूणाशं क्षत्रमजरं दुवोयुः॥ *Rv.* VII-18-25

23. कुविन्मा गोपं रुसे जनस्य कुविद्राजानां मघवनृजीषिन् । *Rv.* III-43-5

acquire necessary powers ! I am limitless in width and depth ! I am possessed of Supreme knowledge ! I am the creator who breathes life into all creatures and sustains the Universe! I am the author of all actions whose power is invincible!"²⁴

It is quite clear that such supremacy can be claimed by the Supreme Being alone and not by the author of the hymn. It is a well-known technique of poetry to make the subject of poetry to speak directly. To treat these words as those of Trasadasyu would be manifestly wrong. Therefore, it would be unfair to construct a divine right theory of kings on the basis of such poetic utterances.

The duty of protection involved administration of justice and the Vedic kings administrated justice with the help of *Purohita*. The Vedic *Purohita* was doubtless the forerunner of the *Brāhmaṇa* minister in the later times. He was in all religious matters the *alter-ego* of the king.²⁵ When the king went to a battle, the *Purohita* took a leading part in his efforts. The seers *Vasiṣṭha*²⁶ and *Viśvāmitra*²⁷ took the important role in the history of king Sudās war between *Dāśarājña* group. The *Senāni*²⁸ was the General

24. *Rv. IV-42*

मम द्विता राष्ट्रं क्षत्रियस्य विश्वायोर्विश्वे अपृता यथा नः ।

क्रतुं सचन्ते वरुणस्य देवा राजामि कृष्णरूपमस्य वद्रेः ॥१॥

अहं राजा वरुणो महान्तान्यसुर्याणि प्रथमा धारयन्त ।

क्रतुं सचन्ते वरुणस्य देवा राजामि कृष्णरूपमस्य वद्रेः ॥२॥

अहमिन्द्रे मरुणस्ते महीत्वोर्विग गभीरे रजसी सुमेके ।

त्वष्टेव विश्वा भुवनानि विद्वान्त्सपैरयं रोदसी धारयं च ॥३॥

25. स संनयः स विनयः पुरोहितः स सुषृष्टः स युधि ब्रह्मणस्पतिः ।

चाक्ष्मो यद्वाजं भरते मती धनादित्यूर्यस्तपति तप्यतुर्वृथा ॥ *Rv. II-24-9*

26. *Rv. VII-18; 83*

27. *Rv. III-33; 53*

28. प्र सेनानिः शूरो अग्रे रथानां गव्यन्नेति हर्षते अस्य सेना । *Rv. IX-96-1*

Rv. VII-20-5 ; X-84-2 etc.

appointed by the king. The *Grāmanī*²⁹ who was a *Viś* or commoner,³⁰ was presumably the head of the village, both for civil purposes and for military operations. He was probably the same as the *Vrājapati*³¹ mentioned in the *Rgveda*, as attended by the *Kulapas* or heads of the families. There are also references to spies (*Spas*)³² who were apparently engaged by the king to secure information about the kingdom and the people. The *Rgveda* also mentions *dūtas*³³ or messengers who were the principal means of communications between the different states.

The later *Samhitas* and *Brahmaṇas* mention a large body of royal officials indicating the development of the administrative system in the later Vedic age. They are mentioned in the later Vedic texts, with negligible differences, in the context of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. They are : 1. The *Rathins* or *Senāni*, the commander of the army, 2. *Purohita*, the chief *brāhmaṇa* adviser of the ruler, 3. *Mahiṣi*, the queen, 4. *Sūta*, the court-minister and chronicler, 5. *Grāmanī*, the head of the village or town 6. *Kṣatri*, the chamberlain, 7. *Samgrahitṛ*, the master of the treasury 8. *Bhāgadūta*, the collector of revenue, 9. *Aksavāpa*, the controller of gambling (dice), 10. *Govikartṛ*, master of forests or destroyers of wild beasts. 11. *Palagala*, the courier.³⁴ All these are the *rājakṛts* or king makers.

- 29. सहस्रधा ग्रामणीरिषन्मनुः सूर्येणास्य यतमानैतु दक्षिणा । *Rv.* X-62-11
- 30. *Taittiriya Samhitā*, II-5-4; *Maitrayinī Samhitā*, I-6-5
- 31. परि त्वासते निधिभिः सखायः कुलपा न व्राजपतिं चरन्तम् । *Rv.* X-179-2
- 32. बिभ्रद्वापि हिरण्यं वरुणो वस्त निर्णिजम् । परिस्पषो निषेदिरे ॥ *Rv.* I-25-13
They are mentioned with *Varuna* who is the divine counterpart of the human king.
- 33. अन्तर्दूतो रोदसी दस्म ईयते होता निष्टो मनुषः पुरोहितः । *Rv.* III-3-2; VI-8-4; VII-3-3; X-14-12.
etc.
- 34. *Taittiriya Samhitā*, I-8-9-1; *Maitrayinī Samhitā*, II-6-5;
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, V-3-1-1.

It is obvious that they were also king's ministers and administrators. They were the persons who actually offer the kingdom to the king with the following words:

"To thee this state is given: thou art the director and regulator, thou art the steadfast and bearer of this or responsibility: to this state is given for agriculture, for well-being, for prosperity, for development."³⁵

The various political units of the Rgvedic age were *grāma*, *jana*, *viś* and *rāṣṭra*. The *grāma*, was a group of houses built near each other for purposes of safety. The word *jana* besides meaning 'man' as individual, also denoted a clan. This, the Bharatas and the Yādavas are called Yādava *jana*³⁶ and Bhārata *jana*³⁷ respectively. Similarly, the people of the two *Vaikarṇa* states who fought against king Sudās are said to have consisted of twenty-one clans.³⁸ The most famous clans of the Rgvedic age were those descended from king Yayāti, viz, the Yadus, Turvaśas, Druhyus, Anus, and Purus,³⁹ and the term *Pañca-janāḥ*⁴⁰ has perhaps been used with the reference to them.

The word *viś* has been used in three senses in the *Rgveda* and later *Samhitās*, viz. 1) the people, 2) the subjects of a king and 3) the commoners as distinguished from the priests and the nobles. It is first sense which is important in the present context; and in

35. *Satapatha Brāhmaṇā*, V-2-1-25

36. श्रवसा याद्वं जनम् । *Rv.* VIII-6-48

37. विश्वामित्रस्य रक्षति ब्रह्मोदं भारतं जनम् । *Rv.* III-53-12

38. एकं च यो विंशतिं च श्रवस्या वैकर्णयोर्जनानाराजा च्यस्तः । *Rv.* VII-18-11

39. यदिन्द्राणि यदुषु तुर्वशेषु यदुद्धृष्ट्वनुषु पूरुषु स्थः । *Rv.* I-108-8

40. इन्द्रियाणि शतकृतो या ते जनेषु पञ्चसु । *Rv.* III-37-9



this sense, the *viśes*, were certainly a bigger unit than the *jana*. In fact, while the word *jana* denotes only a clan,⁴¹ the word *viś* carries the sense of a whole people or nation. It is clear from the terms *Arya-viś*⁴² (Aryan nation) and *Dāsi - viś*⁴³ (*Dāsa* nation), occurring in the *Rgveda*. The foremost of the Vedic deities Indra, Agni, and Soma are similarly called *Viśpatiś*⁴⁴ lords of the Aryan nations. The word *rāṣṭra* denotes a state or realm under the rule of one monarch. That a feeling of patriotism connected with the idea of *rāṣṭra* is clearly proved in the *Rgveda*.⁴⁵ Moreover, it is interesting to note that the Aryans, though divided politically, had the feeling not only of being one people but also of belonging to one country. This is fully proved in the famous *nadiṣtuti* hymn⁴⁶ of the *Rgveda* in which the seer has praised all the important rivers of the extreme east as well as the extreme west of the region inhabited by the R̄gvedic peoples. A feeling of love for mother land also seems in the *Rgvedic mantras*.⁴⁷ Thus, the rudiments of nationalism already existed in the R̄gvedic period.

The king used to collect the *bali* or tax. The fact that people called *balihṛt*⁴⁸ or the *mantras* on *bali* show that the king periodically

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- 41. जनस्य गोपा अजनिष्ट जागृविरग्निः सुदक्षः सुविताय नव्यसे। *Rv.* V-11-1
 - 42. यदी विशो वृणते दस्मार्या अग्निं होतारमध्य धीरजायत॥ *Rv.* X-11-4
 - 43. विश्वस्मात्सीमध्यमाँ इन्द्र दस्यून्विशो दासीरकृणोरप्रशस्ताः। *Rv.* IV-28-4
 - 44. इन्द्र प्रणो धितावानं यज्ञं विश्वेभिर्देवेभिः। तिर स्तवान विश्पते॥ *Rv.* III-40-3
अग्निमग्निं हवीमभिः सदा हवन्त विश्पतिम्। *Rv.* I-12-2
आ वच्यस्व सुदक्ष चम्बोः सुतो विशां वह्निर्विष्पतिः। *Rv.* IX-108-10
 - 45. निर्माया उ त्ये असुरा अभूवन् त्वं च मा वरुण कामयासे।
ऋतेन राजन्ननृतं विविच्चन् मम राष्ट्रस्याधिपत्यमेहि॥ *Rv.* X-124-5
 - 46. *Rv.* X-75
 - 47. *Rv.* I-89-4; I-164-33; I-191-6, etc.
 - 48. अथो त इन्द्रः केवलीर्विशो बलिहृतस्करत्। *Rv.* X-173-6

was receiving gifts from his subjects. This collection of tax was whether voluntary or involuntary is not known. Sometimes, the obedience was compelled but often the king who dwelt in peace and comfort received holy food and free homage from the people. That the major burden of the taxation falling on the rich is suggested by such a remark as : "Agni is eating woods as the king is eating the rich."⁴⁹

The position of the king with regard to land is not clear from the *Rgveda*. However, the fact that the *Dānastutis* not mentioning the gift of land, seems to suggest that the king was not regarded as the owner of the land. The evidence of the *Dānastutis* is confirmed by a story found in the *Śatapatha*⁵⁰ and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas*⁵¹ according to which the earth refused to be given when king Viśvakarma offered it to his affiliating priest.

A *mantra* of the *Rgveda* clearly says that the king was elected by the people (*viśah*).⁵² A song blessing the king at the time of the his of his coronation occurs both in the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* with the slight variations.⁵³ The last *mantra* of this hymn in the *Atharvaveda*, suggests that the election of the king takes place in the Samīti. Thus, there is no doubt that the rulers were elected and deposed by the people. But there is no mention of any elected king among the many rulers of this age. This problem is best concluded in the following passage :

49. पुष्टिर्न रण्वा क्षितिर्न पृथ्वी गिरिर्न बुज्म क्षोदो न शंभु । *Rv.* I-65-4

50. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-7-1 to 15

51. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 39-7

52. ता ई विशो न राजानं वृणाना । *Rv.* X-124-8

53. *Rv.* X-173; *AV.* VI-87-8

"We are led to conclude that the people elected the king unanimously, but the meaning of "people," "elect," and "unanimously" can only be guessed at. Few scholars consider this an election in the modern sense of the term. It is possible that in the early Vedic period the leader of the 'Viś' was chosen by the people and called king, but that in later times certain influential members of the community decided who would be king and others concurred in the decision. Although there is no actual evidence that the monarchy was usually elective in the Vedic times, there are many indications that the ruler was dependent on the support of the aristocracy. And as Jayaswal observed, there was considerable popular participation in the appointment of the king. Even if Vedic kings were accepted rather than chosen by the people there is at least the suggestion of a greater power once enjoyed by the people."⁵⁴

ii. Law and Order :

The *Rgveda Samhitā* does not give much information about the administration of justice and the code of law followed in that time. The word for law or custom in the *Rgveda* is *dharman*,⁵⁵ which later is changed to *dharma*. The *Rgveda* contains numerous *mantras* clearly stating that all gods are firmly maintained by *Rta* (*ddharma*) only.⁵⁶ The majesty as well as the universal character of the *Rta* are described thus:⁵⁷

54 Charls Dremier : Community and Kingship in early India, p.2
Q.Chidambar Kulakarni, *Vedic Foundations of Indian Culture*.

55 त्रिणि पदा वि चक्रमे विष्णुर्गोपा अदाभ्यः । अतो धर्माणि धारयन् । *Rv.* I-22-18

56. *Rv.* I-77-1; II-9-1; IV-3-4; V-67-4; V-68-1; X-8-5 etc.

57. *Rv.* IV-23-8 to 10

ऋतस्य हि शुरुद्यः सन्ति पूर्वीकृतस्य धितिर्वज्नानि हन्ति
ऋतस्य श्लोको बधिरा ततर्द कर्णा बुधानः शुचमान अयोः ॥

"Many are the waters of *Rta*; the adoration of *Rta* destroys iniquities; the intelligent and brilliant praise of *Rta* has opened the deaf (ears) of man.

Many are the stable, sustaining delightful forms of the embodied *Rta*; by *Rta* are the pious expectant of food; by *Rta* have the cows entered into a sacrifice.

The worshipper subjecting *Rta* to his will verily enjoys *Rta*, the strength of *Rta* is developed with speed, and is desirous of possessing water; to *Rta* belong the wide and profound heaven and earth; supreme, milch cows, they yield their milk to *Rta*."

The god of *Rta* is Varuṇa, the friend of human beings. While all those who disobey it are severely punished, sinners, who report to their sins and renew their obedience, may be forgiven. Mitra is Varuṇa's friend. He is to see that faith is kept in all agreement between men and men, group and group. Mitra and Varuṇa thus ensure justice for all.⁵⁸

"Indivisible and mighty heaven and earth protect us who, of fortunate birth, have knowledge of you both; let us not incur the displeasure of Varuṇa or of Vāyu, or of Mitra, the best beloved of men."

ऋतस्य दुळ्हा धरुणानि सन्ति पुरुणि चन्द्रा वपुषे वपूषि ।
 ऋतेन दिर्घमिषणन्त पृक्ष ऋतेन गाव ऋतमा विवेशुः ।
 ऋतं येमान ऋतमिद्वनोत्यृतस्य शुष्मस्तुरया उ गव्युः ।
 ऋताय पृथ्वी बहुले गभीरे ऋताय धेनू परमे दुहाते ।
 58. ध्यावाभूमि अदिते त्रासिथां नो यो वां जनुः सुजनिमान ऋष्वे ।
 मा हेले भूम वरुरणस्य वायोमा मित्रस्य प्रियतमस्य नृणाम ॥ *Rv.* VII-62-4

It is necessary to note that the R̄gvedic seers were realistic enough to realize that the moral order could be maintained only by protecting the good and punishing the wicked. Indra is entrusted with this task. He is the king of all that moves and moves not.⁵⁹ Further, he is the destroyer of the wicked; he is as well the *maghavan*, the bountiful, who showers best of riches, charms of sweet speech and safety of bodies.⁶⁰ *Rta* or *Dharma* is universal principle, the unchanging law, the real and eternal, physical and moral, on which the whole universe rests and by which its functioning is regulated. All objects, creatures, even gods, are governed by *Rta* or *Dharma*.

So far as criminal law is concerned, the Vedic *Samhitās* mention a number of crimes, which were regarded punishable under law. The *R̄gveda* mentions the instance of R̄jrahāśva who was blinded by his father for slaying one hundred rams.⁶¹ This, however, appears to be an exceptional case. Typing the criminal to stake was a common form of punishment. The occurrence of the words Śatadāya⁶² and Vairadeya⁶³ in the *R̄gveda*, shows that the system of *wergild* (*Vairadeya*) was in force and that a man's *wergild* was a hundred (cows).

As regards civil law, there is very little information in the Vedic literature. The words *riktha*⁶⁴ and *dāya*⁶⁵ meaning inheritance occur

59. त्वमग्ने प्रयत दक्षिणां नरं वर्मेव स्यूं परिपासि विश्वतः। *Rv.* I-31-15

60. इन्द्र श्रेष्ठानि द्रविणानि देहि चित्तिं दक्षस्य सुभगत्वमस्मे।
पोषं रथीणां मरीष्टि तनूनां स्वाध्यानां वाचः सुदिनत्वमहाम्॥ *Rv.* II-21-6

61. शतं मेषान्वृक्षे चक्षदानमृजाश्वं तं पितरं चकार। *Rv.* I-116-16

62. सीव्यत्वपः सूच्याच्छिद्यमानया ददतुं वीरं शतदाय मुक्त्यम्। *Rv.* II-32-4

63. उत धा नेमो अस्तुतः पुमाँ इति ब्रुवे पंणिः। स वैरदेय इत्समः॥ *Rv.* V-61-8

64. न जामये तान्वो रिक्थमारैक्यकार गर्भं सनितुर्निधानम्। *Rv.* III-31-2

65. श्रमस्य दायं वि भजन्येभ्यो यदा यमो भवति हर्म्ये हितः॥ *Rv.* X-114-10

in the *Rgveda*. It is clear that the property belonged to the head of the house, namely the father, and others had only a moral claim on it.

Unmarried girls were supported by their brothers after the death of their father, but if they had none, they were sometimes in grave risk of being ruined.⁶⁶

The land was probably owned by individuals as shown by the reference to measurement of fields in the *Rgveda*.⁶⁷ In another hymn of the *Rgveda* lady seer Apāla refers to her father's field (*urvarā*) as a personal possession.⁶⁸ It is not certain whether the sons could get any share in the land of the family during their father's lifetime. Very often a family may have lived together with undivided shares in the land. It was also possible for a father who had a daughter, but no sons, to give her son the right to inherit his property.⁶⁹

There is very little information regarding procedure. The word *madhyamaśī*⁷⁰ occurring in the *Rgveda* has been interpreted as denoting one who intervened between two parties as arbitrator. If so, arbitration must have been the usual method followed in the *Rgvedic* times. The *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*⁷¹ mentions the plaintiff (*praśnin*), the defendant (*abhipraśnin*), and the judge (*praśnavivāka*). But whether these terms refer to voluntary arbitration or to a court

66. अभ्रातरो न योषणो व्यन्तः पतिरिपो न जनयो दुरेवाः। *Rv.* IV-5-5

67. क्षेत्रमिव वि मुमुक्षेजनेनां एकं पात्रमृभवो जेहमानम्। *Rv.* I-110-5

68. असौ च या न उर्वरादिमां तन्वं मम।

अथो ततस्य यच्छिरः सर्वा ता रोमशा कृथि॥ *Rv.* VIII-91-6

69. शासद्विद्विहितुर्नस्यं गाद्विद्वाँ ऋतस्य दीधितिं सपर्यन्।

पिता यज्ञा दुहितुः सेकमृज्वन्त्सं शग्म्येन मनसा दधन्वे॥ *Rv.* III-31-1

70. ततो यक्षमं वि बाधध्वउग्रे मध्यमशीरिव॥ *Rv.* X-97-12

71. *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*, XXX-10

of law is not clear. In the R̄gvedic period the *grāmanī* was exercising both executive and judicial functions.⁷² In the *Yajurveda*, the judicial officer is called *grāmya-vādin*⁷³ with own *Sabhā* or court which proves the separation of executive and judicial functions in the later Vedic age.

iii. *Sabhā* and *Samīti* :

The *Sabhā* and *Samīti* are regarded as the most important features of the Vedic polity. Despite the distressingly vagues and scanty material about them in Vedic works and numerous cotroversies by modern scholars, it is unanimously held that these two assemblies had a significant place in the Vedic polity and provided opportunities for the people or some prominent individuals to exercise effective control over the ruler and his administration.

In the R̄gvedic period, every important *grama* had a permanent institution of its own.⁷⁴ It is called *Sabhā*. The *Sabhā* means a hall⁷⁵ in which, the elders and respectable persons were regularly meet here and talk on important village topics, like cows, cultivation, rain and crops, political, religious, and cultural problems. According to Ludwing, "the *Sabhā* was an assembly not of all the people, but of the Brāhmins and Maghavans or rich patrons."⁷⁶ This view can be supported by the expressions 'Sabheya,' 'worthy of the assembly;' applied to a Brāhmin,⁷⁷ 'rayiḥ *Sabhāvān*,' wealth fitting for the assembly⁷⁸ and so on.

72. दक्षिणवान् प्रथमो हूत एति दक्षिणवान् ग्रामणीरप्रमेति ॥ *Rv.* X-107-5

73. *Taittariya Samhitā*, II-3-1; *Kataka Samhitā*, XI-4;
Maitrayāṇī Samhitā, II-2-1

74. *Rv.* VI-28-6 ; VIII-4-9; X-34-6

75. भद्रं गृहं कुणुथ भद्रवाचो ब्रह्मो वय उच्यते सभासु ।

76. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p.426

77. उताशिष्ठा अनु शृणवन्ति वह्यः सभेयो विप्रो भरते मति धना । *Rv.* II-24-13

A R̄gvedic *mantra* clearly says:

"He who is your friend, Indra, is verily possessed of horses, of chariots, of cattle, and is of goodly form: he is ever supplied with food-comprising riches, and delighting all, he enters an assembly."⁷⁹

The 'rayiḥ *Sabhāvān'* is also highly significant. The birth of *Sabheya* son was earnestly desired by R̄gvedic fathers.

The *R̄gveda* refers to the presence of a Rāja (king) in the midest of an assembly.⁸⁰ It also can be taken to mean either as the presence of a noble in the midest of *Sabhā* or as the presence of the king in festal assemblies or battles, as interpreted by Sāyaṇa.⁸¹ But these *mantras*, give no account to mean that the king attended the assembly as its president.

Perhaps, *Sabhā* was also the place where people entertained themselves by gambling or singing and dancing.⁸² The hall of the *Sabhā* is used for the dice-playing. It is a meeting-place for social intercourse.⁸³ The *Sabhā* was not regarded as a fit place for women to go to, though there is a *mantra* of doubtful significance in the *R̄gveda*.⁸⁴

The *Samīti* is frequently mentioned in the *R̄gveda*.⁸⁵ Hillebrant holds that the *Sabhā* and *Samīti* are much the same. According to

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- 78. इळावां एषो असुर प्रजावान्दीर्थो रयिः पृथुबुद्धः सभावान्। *Rv.* IV-2-5
 - 79. अश्वी रथी सुरूप इन्द्रोमाँ इदिद्र ते सखा।
श्वात्रभाजा वयसा सचते सदा चन्द्रो याति सभामुप॥ *Rv.* VIII-4-9
 - 80. परि सद्मेव पशुमान्ति होता राजा न सत्यः समीतीरियानः। *Rv.* IX-92-6
यत्रौषधीः समग्रतः राजानः समिताविव। *Rv.* X-97-6
 - 81. Sāyaṇa *Rv.* IX-92-6
 - 82. सभामेति कितवः पृच्छमानो जेष्यामीति तन्वा शुशुजानः। *Rv.* X-34-6
 - 83. *Rv.* II-24-6
 - 84. गुहाचरन्ती मनुषो न योषा सभावती विदत्येव सं वाक्। *Rv.* I-167-3
 - 85. *Rv.* I-95-8; IX-92-6; X-97-6; X-166-4, etc.

Ludwig, "the *Samīti* included all people, primarily the *Viśaḥ* (people), but also the *Maghavāns* and *Brāhmins* if they desired, though the *Sabhā* was their special assemble."⁸⁶

The *Sabhā* and *Samīti*, both words are used in the *Rgveda*, but it must have been some difference in their meanings.

The king was attending in the sessions of *Samīti* as well as the nobles.⁸⁷ Zimmer thinks that it was at the *Samīti* that the king was elected.⁸⁸ A Rgvedic *mantra* clearly says; "May all the people wish the for their king."⁸⁹ Although the functions of the *Sabhā* and the *Samīti* cannot be precisely defined, the *mantras* referring to them clearly indicate that both those bodies exercised considerable authority. A famous hymn occurring both in the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, lays great a stress on the spirit of co-operation and unity in this national assembly.⁹⁰ A *mantra* of this hymn which have resounded through the ages are as follows :

"Common be the prayer of these (assembled worshippers)
common be the aquirement, common the purpose, associated be
the desire, I repeat for you a common prayer, I offer for you with a
common oblation."⁹¹

The later *Vedic Samhitās* give some more details about these assemblies. Perhaps it indicates the lines of their development in

86. Q. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-430

87. *Rv. IX-92-6 ; X-97-6*

88. Q. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II p.431

89. विश्वस्त्वा सर्वा वाज्वनु मा त्वद्राष्ट्र मधि भ्रशत् । *Rv. X-173-1*

90. *Rv. X-191 and Av. VI-64-1*

91. समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह वित्तमेषाम् ।
समानं मन्त्रमधि मन्त्रये वह समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥ *Rv. X-191-3*

the later Vedic age. *Sabhā* and *Samīti* are called the two daughters of Prajāpati (creator)⁹² The members of the *Sabhā* were called *Sabhāsads*,⁹³ and its president was called the *Sabhāpati*.⁹⁴ The *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* informs that women did not attend the *Sabhā*.⁹⁵ Further, this *Samhitā* mentions *Sabhā* in the sense of the court of the village judge, 'the *grāmavādin*'.⁹⁶ The *Vājasaneyī Samhita* mentions 'Sabhācara' who is dedicated to *Dharma* (justice).⁹⁷ From this it appears that he was a member of the *Sabhā* as law court.

It is thus certain that the *Sabhā* means not only the hall for political discussion but also for the administration of justice. It is not clear whether the whole assembly was doing so or only a chosen body. The special use of the word *Sabhācara*, however, suggests the latter alternative. The available evidence does not clearly show the functions of the *Sabhā* and *Samīti*. It appears that *Samīti* as the larger body which carries on discussion and decision on policy matters as well as legislation, whereas judicial work falls chiefly within the purview of the *Sabhā* though the latter has the right to discuss political matters also. These two bodies exercise effective control not only in general administration but also over the person of king. The fact that a way ward king could not easily save himself from the wrath of the people, is proved by the example of Duṣṭarītu, king of the Srñjayas, who was disposed from a principality that had existed for ten generations.⁹⁸

92. *Av.* VII-12-1

93. *Av.* VII-72-2; XIX-55-6

94. *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*, XVI-24; *Taittariya Samhitā*, IV-5-3-2 etc.

95. *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*, IV-7-4

96. *Maitrayani Samhitā*, II-2-1 etc

97. *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*, XXX-6

98. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XII-9-3-1

iv. Rgvedic War-Weapons :

The *Rgveda* mentions various weapons, which are used in the war. These weapons were made of stones, wood, bones, and metals. This shows a sort of development in the aspect too, at different stages through which Rgvedic culture had passed.

*Ayudha*⁹⁹ is a general name for weapons. The bow and arrow were the principal weapons of the Rgvedic warrior, and the word *Ayudha* is used to designate them only. Every fighter was armed with the bow and arrow, besides other weapons.

The god Indra's *Vajra* was most effective weapon. It had been first made of stone¹⁰⁰ and then of bone¹⁰¹ before it was made of metal.¹⁰² The *Vajra* was adamantine, undecaying, fiery, scorching, and never-failing. Unlike the stone weapons hurled by Aryan fighter against his enemy, it was "undecaying," because it was always coming back to Indra's hand and could be used again and again. It was, therefore, the great, the deadliest, the dreadest and the most effective weapon that the Aryan could imagine.¹⁰³

The principal weapon of the Rgvedic fighter was bow and arrow. It was necessary for a man (warrior) always to go out armed. He was called *dhanvan*.¹⁰⁴ The bow was composed of a stout staff bent into carved shape (*vakra*), and of a bow-string (*Sya*) made of a strip of

99. युधे यदिष्णान आयुधान्यृथायमाणो निरिणाति शत्रून् ॥ *Rv.* I-61-13

100. इन्द्रासोमा वर्तयतं दिवस्यर्यग्नितसेऽभिर्युवामश्म हम्मभिः । *Rv.* VII-104-5

101. इन्द्रो दधीचो अस्थभिः वृत्रण्यप्रतिष्कुतः जघान नवतीर्नव ॥ *Rv.* I-84-13

102. इन्द्रस्य वज्रः श्वसिता हिरण्ययः । *Rv.* I-57-2

अयच्छथा बाह्लोर्वज्रमायास मधारयो । *Rv.* I-52-8

103. A.C. Das, *Rgvedic Culture*, p.331

104. अर्हन्त्विभर्षि सायकनि धन्वान् । *Rv.* II-33-10

cow-hide, which joined to the ends. The tips of the bow, when the string was fastened, were called *ārtni* and relaxed when not in actual use, the bow was specially strung up when needed for shooting."¹⁰⁵

The arrow was called *iṣu*, *bāṇa*, *śara*, *śarya* or *śalya*.¹⁰⁶ The arrow was usually consisted of three parts, viz. the shaft (*śatya*)¹⁰⁷ which was made of a reed, still known as *Śara*. The head was made either of horn or metal. It is called 'ayo-mukham'.¹⁰⁸ The feather socket (*parna-dhi*) to which feather were fastened to make it fly swiftly through the air.¹⁰⁹ The arrow is shot from the ear place. The *Rgveda* describes as 'having the ear for its place of birth; (*karṇa-yoni*).'¹¹⁰

The arrow-holder (quiver) which is carried by every Bowman put on his back, is called *iṣudhi*¹¹¹ or *niṣanga*.¹¹² The bow-man used a leather hand-guard, for the protection of hand from the impact of the bow-string. It is called *hastaghna*.¹¹³ The points of the arrow-heads were sometimes poisoned.¹¹⁴

The *Pavīra* has evidently the meaning of 'sword' in the *Rgveda*.¹¹⁵ According to the *Nirukta*,¹¹⁶ it denotes a lance. The *Pavi*¹¹⁷ in the

105. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p.388-389

106. यत्र बाणाः संपतन्ति कुमारा विशिखा इव । *Rv.* VI-75-17

दस्यूज्जिम्यैश्च पुरुहूत एवैहत्वा पृथिव्यां शर्वा नि बर्हित् । *Rv.* I-100-18

शर्यैरभिद्युं पृतनासु दुष्टरं । *Rv.* I-119-10

107. शर्यामसनमनुद्धून् । *Rv.* I-148-4

108. *Rv.* VI-75-11.

109. यदन्तरिक्षे पतयन्ति पर्णिनो दियतस्तिगममूर्धनः । *Rv.* VI-46-11

110. तस्य साध्वीरिषिवो याभिरस्यति नृचक्षसो दुशये कर्णयोनयः । *Rv.* II-24-8

111. इषुधिः सङ्घाः पृतनाश्च सर्वाः पृष्ठे निनद्वो जयति प्रसूतः । *Rv.* VI-75-5

112. दुर्मायिवो दुरेव मर्त्यासो निषङ्गिणो रिपिवो हन्त्वासः । *Rv.* III-30-15

113. हस्तम्भो विश्वा वयुनानि विद्वान्युमान्युमांसं परि पातु विश्वतः । *Rv.* VI-75-14

114. आलाक्ता या रुरुशीर्ष्यथो यस्या अयो मुखम् । *Rv.* VI-75-15

115. यो जनान् महिषां इवातितस्थौ पवीरवान् । *Rv.* X-60-3

116. Yāska, *Nirukta*, XII-30

117. त्रयः पवयो मधुवाहने रथे । *Rv.* I-34-2

Rgveda, means a metal tire with sharp edge. But it also occasionally means a weapon, like a share fore breaking down rocks and javelin to be hurled against an enemy.¹¹⁸ The name *asti*¹¹⁹ is also something like a sword (*pavīra*). Though it denotes the sacrificial knife, but it was also used in the war.¹²⁰ The *Kārpāṇa*¹²¹ is also meant as a sword. It occurs in the *Rgveda*, with which Indra is said to have fought against the Vṛtras. The *Kārpāṇa* is the same as the modern *Kṛpāṇa* (sword).

The *Cakra*¹²² (discus) is another weapon used in the war. It was a weapon of Indra, in the *Rgveda*. The later Purāṇic literature mentions that Kṛṣṇa cut down Śiśupāla's head with the help of his *Cakra*.

The *Srakti*¹²³ and *Śakti*¹²⁴ are used as the weapon of a spear in the R̥gvedic age. The *Rṣti*¹²⁵ is also mentioned as a weapon. The *Rgveda* describes the *Rṣti* as held in the hand of Maruts. The lance is called *Sṛka*¹²⁶ in the *Rgveda*.

The *ārā*¹²⁷ is Pūṣan's characteristic weapon, being a good with a pointed metallic end.

118. उत पव्या रथानामद्रिं भिन्दन्त्योजसा । *Rv.* V-52-9

119. असि सूनं नवं चरुमादेधयान आचितं विश्वस्मादिन्द्र उत्तरः । *Rv.* X-86-18

120. *Atharvaveda*, XI-9-1

121. त्वं तान् वृत्रहत्ये चोदयो नून् कार्पणे शूर वज्रिवः । *Rv.* X-22-10

122. अनायुधासो असुरा अदेवश्चक्रेण ताँ अप वप ऋग्नीषिन् । *Rv.* VIII-96-9

123. अव स्वक्तीर्वेश्यावृश्वदिन्दः । *Rv.* VII-18-17

124. वयोधाः कृच्छेश्चितः शक्तीवन्तो गर्भीराः । *Rv.* VI-75-9

125. अंसेष्वेषां नि मिमृशु ऋष्टयः साकं जज्ञिरे स्वधाया दिवे नरः । *Rv.* I-64-4

126. सुके यत्वा प्रत्यहन्देव एकः । *Rv.* I-32-12

127. वि पूषन्नारया तुद पणेरिच्छ हृदि प्रियम् । *Rv.* VI-53-6

The *Vāśi*¹²⁸ in the *Rgveda*, is used in the sense of hachet, which is said to be held by *Tvaṣṭṛ*, the divine carpenter. It described in the *Rgveda* as a weapon of Maruts.¹²⁹ The *Paraśu* (axe)¹³⁰ is used for cutting wood and sometimes used in the battles. There is another word *Parśu*¹³¹ which originally meant a rib-bone. *Sāyaṇa* says “the rib-bone of a horse, the edge of which is as sharp as a sword, and fit for cutting.”¹³² The *Rgveda* mentions that the warriors armed with large and heavy sickles (*Pṛthuparśu*) proceeding to battle.

The *Svadhiti* (axe)¹³³ is used for dissecting the sacrificial horse and also for cutting wood. But, it was also a weapon of war. The *Rgveda* describes as, with the help of *Svadhiti*, the god Indra is said to bring forth excellent water.¹³⁴ The word in this *mantra* probably means the thunderbolt; but it also means the axe, with which Indra was to cut the clouds open.¹³⁵ The *Pāśa*,¹³⁶ is another weapon used in the war. It is made of rope and is like a noose. It must have been a very common weapon of the gods and as like *Varuṇa*, *Soma*, etc.¹³⁷ It may be, the horsemen used for capturing the enemies by flinging it over their necks, from a distance.¹³⁸

128. वशीमेको विभर्ति हस्त आयासीमन्तर्देवेषु निष्ठृविः। *Rv.* VIII-29-3

129. ये पृष्टीभि ऋष्टिभिः साकं वाशीभिरज्जिभिः। *Rv.* I-37-2

130. अभीदु शक्रः परशुर्यथा वनं पात्रेव बिन्दन्त्सत एति रक्षसः। *Rv.* VII-104-21

131. प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्शवो ययुः। *Rv.* VII-83-1

132. *Sāyaṇa*

133. यदश्वस्य क्रविषो माक्षिकाश यद्वा स्वरौ स्वधितौ रिसमस्ति। *Rv.* I-162-9

134. श्येनो गृद्धाणां स्वदितिर्वनानां सोमः पवित्रमत्येति रेभन्। *Rv.* IX-96-6

135. A.C. Das, *Rgvedic Culture*, p.335

136. पाशा आदित्या रिषवे विचृत्ताः। *Rv.* II-27-16

137. उदुत्तमं वरुण पाश मस्मदवाधमं वि मध्यमं श्रथाय। *Rv.* I-24-15

138. गृण्णाति रिपुं निधया निधापतिः सुकृतमा मधुनो भक्षमाशत। *Rv.* IX-83-4

The warriors had used some protection materials in the war. The word *Kavaca* is first time used in the *Atharvaveda*,¹³⁹ in the sense of breast-plate. The word *Varman*¹⁴⁰ occurs in the *Rgveda*, in the sense of 'body-armour' or 'coat of mail.' The warriors were putting on the *Sipra* (helmet)¹⁴¹ to cover their heads to protect their heads in the war. The noble warriors were put this on coats of nail called *drāpis*.¹⁴² But, in the *Rgveda*, *drāpi* is sometimes used in the sense of garments.

139. *Atharvaveda*, XI-10-22

140. त्वमग्ने प्रयत दक्षिणं नरं वर्मेव स्यूतं परिपासिविश्वतः । *Rv.* I-32-15

141. आ त्वा सुषिप्र हरयो वहन्तुश्नहव्यानि प्रति नो जुषस्व । *Rv.* I-101-10

142. भिभ्रद् द्रापिं हिरण्ययं वरुणो वस्त निर्णिजम् । *Rv.* I-25-13

पिशङ्गम् द्रापिं प्रति मुञ्चते कविः । *Rv.* IV-53-2

9. Religion and Philosophy in the Rgvedic Age

i. Religion :

The Rgvedic people were nature worshippers. They were deeply affected by the apparently mysterious working of the awe-inspiring forces of nature. They looked upon all nature as a living presence. The luminaries who follow a fixed course across the sky are the *devas* or gods. Naturally, the sense of the dependence of human welfare on the powers of nature, the unexplained mysteries of whose working invests them with almost a 'super-natural' (divine character), finds its expression in various forms of worship.

Although the number of gods has increased, yet there existed no fixed seniority amongst them. There existed a sort of communism amongst gods as too many offices, powers and functions were held in common by them. At one time the same mighty god is described as dependent on others. This was perhaps due to the reason that *Rgveda* was not composed at one time by one person. Macdonell has pointed out that - "in the frequent hymns addressed to the 'Viśvedevas' or 'All-gods', all the deities, even the lesser ones, are praised in succession, and that as the great mass of the Vedic hymns was composed for the ritual of the Soma-offering, which included the worship of almost the pantheon, the technical priest could not but know the exact relative position of each god in that ritual."¹

According to the *Rgveda*² and the *Atharvaveda*,³ the number of the Vedic gods is thirty-three. In one *mantra* of the *Rgveda*, eleven of

1. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Strassburg, 1897, p.16

2. *Rv.* III-6-9 ; VIII-28-1; 30-2; 35-3; 57-2; IX-92-4

3. *Atharvaveda*, X-7-13

the gods are addressed as being in heaven, eleven on earth, and eleven in waters, i.e., atmosphere.⁴ The *Atharvaveda* similarly divides the gods into dwellers in the heaven, air and earth.⁵ The *Brāhmaṇas* also give the number of the gods as thirty-three.

Yāska, following the triple classification of the *Rgveda*, divides the different gods enumerated in the fifth chapter of the *Naighaṇṭuka Khāṇḍa* into the three orders, namely, *Pṛthivīsthāna* (terrestrial), *antarikṣasthāna* (areial or intermediate) and *dyusthāna* (celestial).⁶

1. Terrestrial gods (*Pṛthivīsthāna*) : Pṛthvī, Agni, Soma, Br̥haspati and the rivers.
2. Areial gods (*Antarikṣasthāna*): Indra, Apānapāt, Rudra, Vāyu, Parjanya, Āpaḥ, and Mātariśvān.
3. Celestial gods (*dyusthāna*): Dyaus, Varuṇa, Mitra, Sūrya, Savitṛ, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, the Ādityās, Uṣas and the Aśvins.

Yāska, further says that in the opinion of his predecessors there are only three deities, Agni on earth, Vāyu or Indra in air, and Sūrya in heaven.⁷

This view is clearly based on a *mantra* of the *Rgveda* which says- ‘may Sūrya protect us from heaven, Vāta from air, Agni from the earthly regions’.⁸ Yāska, however, does not seem to agree with the view that

4. ये देवासो दिव्येकादश स्थ पृथिव्यामध्येकादश स्थ । *Rv.* I-139-11

5. *Atharvaveda*, X-9-12

6. Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII-XII

7. तिस्रं एव देवता इति नैरुक्ताः अन्निः पृथिवीस्थानः वायोर्वेद्नो वान्तरिक्षस्थानः । सूर्योद्युस्थानः । तासां महाभाग्यादेकैकस्था अपि बहूनि नामधेयानि भवन्ति अपि वा कर्मप्रतक्त्वात् ।

Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII-5.

8. सूर्यो नो दिवस्पातु वातो अन्तरिक्षात् । अग्निहिर्न पार्थिवेभ्यः । *Rv.* X-158-1

all the gods are only manifestations of the three representative deities, though he concedes that all the gods.

The Rgvedic deities are free from taint, from hate; none of them is ever amiss. All are further of *Rtas*, pure in spirit and infallible. Agni is the guardian of *Rta* and he is *Satya*, Indra is *Satya* and *Rta*. Similarly Sūrya, Uṣas, Aditi, Mitra, Varuṇa, are all intimately associated with *Rta*. The deities again represent the fine qualities of human beings such as strength, valour, kindness, nobility, love, tenderness, beneficence, sympathy, as well as wrath and fury. Each one of the deities is described as the best of sages, best of poets, best of heroes, most affectionate, the best friend and the best comforter. No one can surpass them in beauty. They manifest in love. They bring bliss. No wonder that the seers address them as father, Mother, Son, Brother and Friend.

Similarly, the Rgvedic seers have spoken of the deity not only as king (*rāja*), as emperor (*sāmrāt*) and as queen of the world (*buvanasya patni*), as leader (*prāṇeta*), as protector (*gopa*), as architect (*viśvakarma*) and as physician (*bhiṣak*). Again, in a symbolic way, he has been called ‘*Suparṇa*’, the beautiful winged (bird), and through metonymy, the material for worship has been transformed into the name of the deity, e.g., Agni means the effulgent being, and Soma (the Soma libation) the ultimate reality. Similarly certain natural phenomena have been transformed through the imagination into divinities, e.g. Uṣas, Sarasvatī, Day, Night, Heaven and earth, the sun, and so on. There are deities personifying death (*Mṛtyu*) and faith (*Śraddā*) and other deities like Indra (warrior and leader) and Varuṇa (judge, guardian of law) who represent ideal human qualities.

ii. **Phylosophy:**

The religion of the *Rgveda* is usually described as the worship of *Devas*, who are nearly all personifications of the phenomena of nature. Yet a deeply abstract philosophical ideas are croped up in some hymns as a reminder of long journey made from primitive polytheism to systematic philosophy, through the stages of naturalistic polytheism, monotheism, and monism.

One god was therefore identified with another, or gods were invoked in pairs or conjointly in groups. Systematization took the form of the classification of the gods into different categories or of the amalgamation of them all into one comprehensive group of the "All-gods". This systematization was but a step forward towards the more logical monotheism. The monotheistic trend flashes forth even in some of the hymns celebrating gods like Indra, Varuṇa, and Savitṛ when the deity being addressed is treated as the Supreme God ruling over the entire universe. Thus, in *Rv.* I-101-3 Indra's ordinances are said to be obeyed by heaven and earth, Varuṇa and Sūrya; while in *Rv.* II-38-9 it is said that Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman and Rudra cannot resist the ordinance of Savitṛ. In *Rv.* X-121 Hiranyaagarbha is called the one Lord of every creature, the one king of the breathing and winking world, the one soul of gods, and the one supreme god among gods.

There are, however, a number of *mantras* which clearly and indubitably assert the unity of God. *Rv.* I-164-4 asks "who has seen the first-born, when the boneless one bore the one with bones? Where

9. को ददर्श प्रथमं जायमानमस्थन्वन्तं यदनस्था बिभर्ति ।
भूम्या असुरसृगात्मा क्व स्विल्को विद्वांसमुप गात्रष्टमेतत् ॥ *Rv.* I-164-4

is the life, the blood, the self of this *bhūmi* (universe)? Has anyone approached the knowing one to ask this question?"⁹ As if in answer to this question, a *mantra* of the same hymn affirms that the central principle was the genderless *Sat* (the "real") which, though one, was called by various names, Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan, etc.¹⁰ Thus, in some of the hymns of the *Rgveda*, which designate indifferently the Supreme or Absolute as 'He' or 'It' is reflected the usual vacillation between monotheism and monism met with in all philosophies.

The problem of the origin and nature of the world-stuff is a philosophical one, and is not neglected by the R̄gvedic seers. *Rv.* X-190-1 tells that from heat (*tapas*) were produced *Rta* and *Satya*; then, night, the ocean, and *samvatsara* (year) were in succession¹¹ *Rv.* X-72-2 says that *sat* was produced from *asat*.¹² From the mythological point of view, each one of the gods in turn is said to be the creator of the universe, the universe being sometimes looked upon as the finished product of the carpenter's and joiner's skill. For ex. *Rv.* X-31-7 asks "what was the wood, which the tree, out of which they fashioned heaven and earth?"¹³ *Rv.* X-121 takes up the problem of creation on a monotheistic level and tells that Hiranyagarbha arose from the great waters, pervading the universe, and thus created the world out of eternally pre-existing matter.

10. इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान्।

एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यनि यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ॥ *Rv.* I-164-46

11. ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीदत्पसोऽध्यजायत ।

ततो रात्रयजायत ततः समुद्रो अर्णवः ॥ *Rv.* X-190-1

12. ब्रह्मणस्पतिरेता सं कर्मार इवाधमत् ।

देवानां पूर्वे युगेऽसतः सदजायत ॥ *Rv.* X-72-2

13. किं स्विद्वनं क उ स वृक्ष आस यतो ध्यावापृथिवी निष्टत्क्षुः । *Rv.* X-31-7

In the *Nāsadiya-Sūkta*, a famous hymn of the *Rgveda*, the idea not only of god being the sole ruler of universe but also of his being the sole reality before creation expressed in the most effective language. One *mantra* of the hymn describes the condition before the creation of universe as follows:

“Death was not nor at that period immortality, there was no indication of day or night; that one unbreathed upon breathed of his own strength, other than that there was nothing else whatever.”¹⁴

The last *mantra* of this hymn is notable in the entire religious literature of the world for its boldness and frankness. The seer does not want to say dogmatically whether god is both the creator and ruler of universe or only its ruler. The idea is finely expressed as below :

“Here from whom this creation arose, he may uphold it, or he may not (no one else can); he who is its superintendent in the highest heaven, he assuredly knows, or if he knows not (no one else does).”¹⁵

The word *māyā* in the *Rgveda* generally denotes “occult power” applicable in a good sense to gods and in a bad sense to demons. In the *Rgveda*, X-54-2 it is used in the sense of ‘illusion’, thus forestalling later *Vedānta* philosophy.

In the *Purṣa-Sūkta* (X-90) the body of the Puruṣa is said to be the original material, as it were, out of which world is made. The gods

14. नमृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न राक्रया अहं आसीतप्रकेतः।

आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्बान्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥ *Rv.* X-129-2

15. इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आ आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न।

यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्त्सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥ *Rv.* X-129-7

are the agents of creation, the act of creation is a sacrifice, and the Puraṣa is the victim. Although anthropomorphism pushed to the last limit, is responsible for the greatness of God; and the unity of world and god, being described the terms of the gigantic dimensions of the Puraṣa, the hymn X-90 is a sort of crude allegory of the theory of creation from the One-Absolute found in the *Nāsadiya-Sūkta*. Only, here the Supreme reality becomes the positive Puruṣa - the begetter as well as the begotten: " From the Puruṣa, *Virāt* was born, and from *Virāt* again the Puruṣa."

Mention may also be made a famous *mantra* found in the *Rgveda* (I-164-20) which is as under:

" Two birds associated together, and mutual friends, take refuge in the same tree: One of them eats the sweet fig; the other, abstaining from food, merely looks on."¹⁶

This *mantra* has been understood through the ages as mentioning god, soul, and matter. The tree is symbolic of matter, the bird eating the sweet fig is the soul which has to enjoy the fruit of action, while the bird that does not eat is god who being perfect is not subject to the fruit of action.

16. द्वासुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते।
तयोरन्यः पिष्पलं स्वाद्वत्यनश्नन्यो अभि चाकशीति ॥ *Rv. I-164-20*

10. Science in the *Rgveda*

The *Rgveda* is, however, not text-book on science and aesthetics. Yet, the *Rgveda* has freely incorporated some elements of physical science in its *mantras*. Besides on such basic elements, it may be said that the people during Rgvedic period had having the knowledge of the physical science.

Astronomy :

Astronomy or the science of stars was much advanced in Rgvedic era and the seers based their time-reckoning science on Astronomy.

The *Rgveda*, states that it rains during the *Dāksinayana* or the southward journey of Sun. The Southward journey of the Sun is mentioned as *Pitryaṇa*. Devayana or the northward journey of the Sun is mentioned in *Rv. x-18-1*.

The *Rgveda* IV-57-5 presents a request to the deity *Śunāśīrau* to shower the waters prepared in the heavens. This statement clearly indicates that the rains were connected with *Śunāśīrau* (Canis major and canis minor) which is nothing else than *Mṛga Nakṣatra*.

These two statements together prove that the Rgvedic seers that the rains begin with the summer solstice in India, and at the time of the summer solstice, the sun resided in Canis major and Canis minor (the *Mṛgaśīras Nakṣatra*). Thus, it is clear that the seers had linked astronomy with the Meteorology or the science of climate.

The *Rgveda* I-103-13, states : "who awakened Rbhūs ? The Sun answered that the Dog awakened, because today is the end of the year." Here the Dog means the *Mṛga Nakṣatra*. Rbhūs means the

clouds. The clouds were awakened by it, that means the clouds started showering the rains. The Sun was at Mṛga when the rains began in that ancient era.

While observing the movement of the Moon among the fixed stars, the Rgvedic seers found out five planets which have mentioned in the *Rgveda*. Thus distinction between the moving planets and the non-moving stars is shown.

Cosmogony :

The Vedic theory of creation is best stated in the creation hymn (*Nāsadiya sūkta* X-129). Visvakarma, the Supreme Architect, constructed this universe with the help of gods (*Rv.* X-81-83). They wove materials into a systematic pattern (*Rv.* I-130). Some others shaped it by blasting and smelting (*Rv.* V-72-2). This universe was constructed in stages as house. According to *Puruṣa-sūkta* (X-90) the Universal Man was sacrificed and there came into being the Earth, the sky, the Wind, the Moon and the Sun. Another hymn of the *Rgveda* (*Rv.* I-115) traces the origin of everything to Sun who is the soul of everything that moves and moves not. Agni, Soma, Sūrya, Indra, Rudra, are all individually or collectively praised in different hymns as Makers of this world.

Mathematics :

The advance study in Astronomy was based equally on advanced knowledge of number, numericals, methods of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication, etc. In fact, the main branches of mathematics- Arithmetic, Geometry, Trigonometry and Algebra were considerably developed in the Vedic period.

The Rgvedic hymns make several references to Arithmetic principles. For, eg, mention of the digit 99 is in *Rv.I-84-13*. Reference to functions is in *Rv. X-90.* etc.

For the sake of metrical facility, the numbers which are large, are expressed in additive method. For instance, an expression for 3339 in Rgveda X-52-6.

त्रीणि शता त्रीसहस्राणि त्रिंशच्च नव च ।

as three hundreds and three thousands and thirty and nine.
The Rgvedic *mantra* runs thus:

त्रीणि शतात्रि सहस्राप्यग्निं
त्रिंशच्च देवा नव चासपर्यन् ॥

An idea of the circumference of a circle is described thus:

कासीत्यमा प्रतिमा किं निदानम् ।
आज्यं किमासीत् परिधिः क आसीत् ॥
छन्दः किमासीत् प्रउगं किमुक्थं ।
यदेवा देवमजयन्त विश्वे । *Rv. X-130-3*

(What is the measurer? who measures and counts all ? What is the cause and what the essence, like ghee, in this world ? What *circumference*? What is the independent and what the praise worthy object ? The Supreme Lord whom the learned have worshipped.)

Principle of *trita* (त्रित) is mentioned in the *Rgveda*. The *mantra* is as below:

अभिस्ववृष्टिं मदे अस्य युध्यते
रघ्वीरिव प्रवणे सस्तुरुतयः ।
इन्द्रो यद्वज्ञी धृष्माणो अन्धसा
भिनद्वलस्य परीधीरिव त्रितः ॥ *Rv. I-52-5*

(To him as in wild joy he fought with him who stayed the rain
 helpers sped like swift streams dwon a slope. When Indra, thunder-
 armed, made bold by some draughts, as *Trita* cleaveth Vala's fences,
 cleft him through.)

Surface of a cylinder is mentioned as below:

त्रितः कूपेऽवहितो देवान्हवत ऊतये
 तच्छुश्राव बृहस्पतिः कृणवन्तं हूरणादुरुम् । *Rv.* I-105-7

(*Trita*, when buried in the well, calls on the gods to succor him.
 That call of his, Brhaspati heard and released him from distress-
 Mark this my woe, ye earth and heaven).



CHAPTER - IV

MODERN APPROACH TO THE HISTORICAL ELEMENTS IN THE RGVEDA-AN APPRAISAL

The modern approach to the Rgvedic sources of the historical elements explained in the preceeding chapter is examined here. The Rgveda is no doubt a valuable record of ancient achievements in the fields of religion soceity, art science and culture. Geography of the Rgvedic India has also been traced to the vedic statements indicating the areas of the gradual expansion of the land through the ages. Many of the modern interpreters regards the Rgveda as a predominantly Indo-European document and therefore its interpretation demands the basis of comparative philology and comparative mythology traditional commentators do not agree with many views of modern interpreters. In the Nirukta Yāska mentions different schools of thought such as the Yajñikas the Vaiyakaraṇas the Nairuktas, the Aitihāsikas and others who tried to interpret Veda in accordance with their own thought.

i. Original home of Aryans : Some Theories

Tracing the location of the original home of the Aryans is a very difficult issue and a lot of controversy surrounds it. The scholars of different countries have striven hard to prove that their country was

the original habitat of Aryanas. There is no written record to the effect of Aryan original house prior to their migration to India. In its absence the history of the Aryans can be reproduced only by making a comparative study of the important and ancient languages of the world. The person who was the first to discover the true course of this similarity was Sir William Jones who in his famous address to the '*Asiatic Society of Bengal*' delivered in 1786 A.D. :

"The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a strong affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, that could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists. There is a similar reason, thought not quite so forceful, for supposing that both the Gothic and the celtic, though blended with a different idiom, had same origin with the Sanskrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family."¹

Therefore, the forefathers of the speakers of these languages must have lived together at one place sometime. This view has further been supported by the study of climatic conditions, flora and fauna and physiographical conditions known to them.

What was the name of that race ? Where did it first live and when did it migrate to other places in different groups, all this have been made most controversial. Different theories have been propounded

1. Q. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p-47

by scholars like Max Muller, Schrader (*Pre-historic Antiquities of the Aryan peoples*), Taylor (*origin of the Aryans*), A.C. Dass (*Rgvedic India*), B.G. Tilak (*Arctic Home in Veda*), L.D. Kalla (*The Home of the Aryans*), Dr. Sampurnanand (*Aryon kā Adidesa*) etc.

In the beginning, the name given to this race was based on the hypothetical name of the original language since the linguistic similarity was found in the languages spoken from India to Europe, the first common name given to that language was 'Indo-European.' Another name given to that language was 'Indo-German.' This name was given with a view to giving more importance to the Germans as this type of research was initiated by the German scholars. However, this name could not become popular. Ultimately 'Indo-Aryan' or 'Aryan' became the popular designation for that language. Though in the beginning, this name was used as a common designation of the Sanskrit and Zend languages, it also began to be used for the ancient common mother language of all languages of this stock. On the basis of that name, the speakers of that hypothetical common language, too, were called Aryans. Thus the present classification of human races into Aryan, Semetic, Mangolian etc. was based upon the linguistic principle. Attempts were also made by anthropologists to study the classification of human races on the basis of human remains or skulls.

The intention of European scholars behind establishing the existence of a common Indo-Aryan language and thereby propounding the theory of common race, was this that firstly, they wanted to prove that Aryan race groups; secondly, they are the direct descendants of the Aryans, hence pure Aryan in comparison to

Aryans of India. But no literary evidence corroborates these assumptions of the European scholars. On the other hand literary evidences amply justify that the Aryan people were divided into two groups, one belonging to India and the other to Iran. *Sapta-sindhu* region was the cradle of Aryan culture. Both groups developed high culture and produced literatures of high calibre the former group produced the *Veda* and the latter group the *Avesta*.

For over hundred years the linguistic scholars, the archaeologists, the historians and others have tried in vain to find out the original homeland of Aryans. Their views are as diametrical to each other as east is to the west. As a consequence, there are as many theories held by many authors.

Theory of Europe as Original Homeland of Aryans :

The most important theory which held the field for a long time was that the Aryans originally lived in central Asia. The geographical distribution of the idioms of Indo-European speech-family, therefore, does suggest that the original home of the Indo-European is to be sought rather in Europe than in Asia. Moreover of all the living Indo-European languages of the present day, it is Lithuanian and not Sanskrit (even if considered a living language) or any of its daughter dialects, that has kept closest to the basic idiom reconstructed by comparative philology.

These two fundamental facts make a strong *prima facie* case against the theory that India was the original home of the Aryans.²

2. R.C. Majumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-206

Prof. Max Muller, a great German scholar, in his book '*Lectures on the science of languages.*' proves central Asia as the original homeland of Aryans. He is of a opinion that the information, regarding the early Aryans could be gathered from two main sources. They are Vedic literature and the Iranian book *Zend-Āvestā*. It is evident from the study of these two works that some time in history the inhabitants of India and Iran must have lived together because much affinity in the culture and civilization of the two communities is discernible. The inhabitants of both the countries were nature worshippers. Agriculture and the cattle breeding was their main occupation. The animals like horse were known to them.

These considerations prove that the original homeland must have been some where near Iran or India. Taking into account the geographical position of the original homeland of the Aryans, some historians have arrived at the conclusion that Central Asia was the original homeland of the Aryans, wherfrom they went to Europe, Iran and India.

Objections:

1. Such a small area could not accommodate such a vast majority of people. Moreover the region is not at all fertile. Above all honey is absent in this region which we know that the early Aryans were fond of honey.
2. Some scholars have tried to counteract this critic. According to Strabo in the first century A.D. this region was very productive. He has referred a region known as '*Karman*' which was very productive at that time, but not at present. Moreover history is a testimony to

the fact that climatical conditions often undergo a change. There is every possibility that Aryans might have lifted in this region because of its small size.

In this connection Budha Prakash writes- 'scholars have tried to re-construct an hypothetical Indo-European language on the basis of linguistic equations, based on the data of existing languages, and formulate the cultural traits of its speakers from its stand point. But this method is very unsatisfactory since by it one would conclude as A.B. Keith remarked, that the Indo-European knew butter but not milk, snow and feet but not rain and hands."³

On the contrary, a romantic reaction, which identified languages with race set in soon and was given powerful expression by Penka who declared language to be "organic product of an organism subject to organic laws." Penka thinks that Scandinavia was the cradleland of these people.⁴

This view is again objected as below:

1. In fact, at the beginning, every natural language must have been confined within a not too large racial group though it by no means follows that there could not have originated more than one language within one racial group at beginning.
2. Only it is necessary to remember that the racial group, within which the primitive Indo-European language originated, may have itself adopted a non-Indo-European language in course of its history or may have altogether passed out existance.⁵

3. Buddha Prakash : *Rgveda and Indus Valley Civilisation*, p124

4. Penka, Q. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-206

5. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-205

Some scholars place the original home of the Indo-European in central and eastern Europe. H. Schmidt locates it on the lower Danube, De Michchi in Hungary and P.Giles in the area which is bounded on its eastern side by the Carpathians, on its south by the Balkans, on its western side by the Austrian and Bohmer wald and on the north by the Erzgebirge and the mountains, which links them up with the carpathians, that is, the country now called Hungary, Austria and Bohemia.⁶

The problem of the origin of the Indo-Europeans is also discussed by Italian scholars from the standpoint of the history of their country.

A group of scholars considers South Russia as the original home of the Indo-Europeans. Schraders, Myres, Cornoy, Burrow etc. follow this view and *peake and childe see in the ochre sepulchres* of the Russian steppes the traces of the movements of the Indo-European peoples.⁷

Another group of scholars seeks the home of the Indo-Europeans in Asia Minor. Suggesting this view, Feist has shown that the Germans were originally a non-Indo-European people speaking a *non-Indo-European language*. It was later that adopted and assimilated the Indo-European language as a result of diverse influences.⁸

But, these theories too have suffered of the same fate which the previous theories had. In fact the problem of the location of the original homeland of the Aryans is still unsolved.

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6. P.Giles, *The Aryans*, Cambridge History of India, Vol.I, P.61; *Indo-Europeans*, Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vol. II.XII. p.266
 7. O. Schrader, *Reallexicon der-indogermanische Sprache* (1901); T. Burru : *The Sanskrit Language* p-30; A Cornoy, *Les Indo-Europeans* (Louvain 1921)
 8. Sigmund Feist : La Question du pays d, Original des Indo-Europeans, Scientia (1913), pp-304-313

Theory of Arctic Region :

The famous Maharashtrian scholar Bal Gangadhar Tilak in his book '*Arctic home in the Vedas*'⁹ has tried to prove that the Arctic region or North pole region was original homeland of the Aryans. His view is that the description of the natural phenomenon in *Rgveda* tallies with that of the region of North-Pole. There are references in *Rgveda* that in the original homeland of the Aryans severe cold, longer dusks and six months day and night were the common features. These considerations support the view that the early Aryans were the inhabitants of North pole and from there they migrated to Europe, Central Asia and India. But this theory of Tilak has not found favour of the scholars as it is based on the science of the Astronomy.

The Theory of Tibet as the Original Homeland :

In his book '*Satyartha Prakash*' Swami Dayanand maintains that Aryans were the inhabitants of Tibet. F.E. Pargiter, in his book '*Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*' has also supported the theory of Swami Dayanand. But this view is also not accepted by the scholars.

The theory of India (Sapta-sindhu region) as original home of Aryans :

In the last century the Bangali historian Dr. A.C. Das in his book "*Rgvedic India*"¹⁰ has tried to prove that the Aryans did not come to India from outside, rather they were the inhabitants of India. The *Rgveda*, which throws sufficient light on the customs and culture of Aryans, gives no indication that the Aryans came to India from

9. See B.G. Tilak, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, pp.58-60, 160

10. See A.C. Das, *Rgvedic India*. 2nd ed., p.71

outside. According to *Rgveda* the Aryans dwelt in the region of *Saptasindhu*, which comprised modern Punjab, Kashmir, Kabul and Gandhara. This region stretched from the river Sindhu to the river Saraswati. Later on, they spread to other parts of India. In *Purāṇas*, there is the description of *Devāsura* (God-demons) war and *Devas* defeated the Asuras. *Zenda-Āvestā*, the religious book of the Iranians also records the same type of war. From these references we can deduce the inference that was most probably among the Aryans and Iranians in which the Iranians were defeated and driven away.

2. Ārya and Dasyu : Historical connotation

In the *Rgveda Samhitā*, the word *ārya* with its many declensional forms occurs thirty-six times, thirteen times with *dāsa*¹, nine times with *dasyu*², thirteen times independently³ and two times with *dāśih*⁴ (in *Rv.* IV-103-3 along with *dasyu*). In the *Rgveda* V- 34.5, Ārya is referred to as leading the *Dāsa* at his will.⁵ Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa take *ārya* here to mean *svāmī*.⁶ Here according to them, *ārya* is an attribute of Indra. In the *Rgveda* X.86.19, Indra is mentioned as going everywhere distinguishing the *Dāsa* and the *Ārya*⁷. In the *Rgveda* X.138.2, Sūrya is said to have unyoked his chariot in the mid-way of heaven when Indra, the *Ārya*, found himself a match to *Dāsa*.⁸ Griffith finds here, a reference to a detention of the Sun to enable the Aryan to complete the overthrow of their enemies.⁹ (In mantras referred to above Ārya and *Dāsa* are depicted as opposite ones, and the former is described as winning over the latter).

In nine mantras of the *Rgveda*, *Ārya* and *Dasyu* have been mentioned together. the *Rgveda* VI.51.8 Indra is requested to discern Aryas and Dasyus and made the latter surrender to the former.¹⁰

1. *Rv.* V.34.-6; VI.22-10; 33-3; 60-6; VII.83-11, etc.

2. *Rv.* 1.51-8; 103-3; 117-21, etc.

3. *Rv.* I-130-89; 156-5; IV.26-2; 30-18; VI.33-3, etc.

4. *Rv.* I.103.3; VI.25-2

5. इन्द्रो विश्वस्य दमिता विभीषणो यथावशं नयति दासमार्यः। *Rv.*V-34-6

6. Sāyaṇa on *Rv.*V-34-6

7. अयमेनि विचाकशद्विचिन्वन्दासमार्यम्। *Rv.*X-86-19

इन्द्रो ब्रवीति । विचाकयशत् पश्यन् यजमानान् दासम् उपक्षपयितारमसुरं आर्यम् ।

अपि च विचिन्वन् पृथक्कुर्वन् अयम् अहमिन्दः एमि यज्ञं प्रति गच्छामि - Sāyaṇa on *Rv.*X-86-19

इन्द्र आह अयम् गच्छामि विपश्यन् पृथक्कुर्वन् असुरम् आर्य च। Veṅk,Ibid

8. वि सूर्यो मध्ये अमुचद्रथे दिवो विद्धासाय प्रतिमानमार्यः। *Rv.*X-138-3

यदा अभिन्न इन्द्र दासाय उपक्षपिवे वृत्रादये प्रतिमानं प्रतिकृतिं प्रतीकारं विदत् वेति जानाति । Sāyaṇa on *Rv.*X-138-3

9. Griffith, R.T.H. footnote to *Rv.*X-138-3

10. वि जानीहार्यन् ये च दस्यवो बर्हिष्मते इन्धय शासदव्रतान्। *Rv.*I-51-8

Here Skandasvāmin takes *āryān* to mean *dasyavah* “as those who do not perform the sacrifices”.¹¹ Sāyaṇa interprets *Āryan* as “Wise ones the performers of sacrifices’ and *dasyavāh* as “hinderers of sacrificers’.¹² In the *Rgveda* 1.103.3, there is a reference to shattering of the forts of Dāsas by Indra. Indra is prayed for casting his dart at the *Dasyu* and increasing the Āryas’ might and glory.¹³ Skandasvāmin takes *dasyu* to mean *anārya* i.e., ‘who is not an Ārya’.¹⁴ This according to Skandasvāmin *Anārya* is opposite to *Ārya*, though this word nowhere occurs in the *Rgveda*, Sāyaṇa, here too, takes *āryāḥ* to mean wise ones’, the eulogisers’.

In the *Rgveda* II.11.19, there is a reference to the Ārya subduing the Dasyus.¹⁵ Here Sāyaṇa understands *āryeṇa* to mean *āryabhāvena*. In the *Rgveda* III.34.9, there is an explicit mention of *ārya varṇa*. Indra is said to have protected the *Ārya Varṇa* after having smitten the Dasyus. How did Indra protect the *Ārya Varṇa* having smitten the Dasyus? The seer says, Indra gained possession of the horses, the Sun, the cows the feeder of many, the gold and all the enjoyments and giving these to *Ārya* protected the *Ārya Varṇa*.¹⁶ Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa take *ārya varṇa* to mean ‘the noblest

11. वि जानीहि आर्यन् साधुवृत्तान् यागपरानित्यर्थः । ये च दस्यवः देवानां शत्रुवृत्ताः अयागपरास्तान् । यद्धनयष्टंश्व जानीहि । Skandaswāmin *Rv.I-51-8*

12. हे इन्द्र त्वं आर्यन् किदुषः अनुष्टातृन् वि जानीहि विशेषेण बुल्यस्व ।

ये च दस्यवः तेषामनुष्टातृणानुपक्षपायतारः शत्रवः तानपि विजानीहि । Sāyaṇa on *Rv.I-51-8*

13. स जातुभर्मा श्रद्धश्चान् ओजः पुरो विभिन्नब्राचरद्वि दासीः । विद्वान् वज्रिन्दस्यवे हेतिमस्यार्य सहो वर्धया ह्युमनिन्द्र ॥ *Rv.I-103-3*

14. दस्युशब्दोऽनार्यवचनः । Skandaswāmin on *Rv.I-103-3*

15. सनेम ये त ऊतिभिस्तरन्तो विश्वाः स्पृथ आर्येण दस्यून् । *Rv.II-11-19*

16. ससानात्याँ उत सूर्यं ससानेन्द्रः ससान पुरुभोजसं गाम् ।

हिरण्यमुत भोगं ससान हत्वी दस्यून् प्रार्यं वर्णमावत् । *Rv.III-34-9*

order,' ‘the first three *varṇas*.¹⁷ The association of the word *varṇa* with both Ārya and Dāsa¹⁸ may be referred to two classes of people distinct from each other, on the basis of colour or deeds performed by them. Griffith in the footnote explains *ārya varṇa* as “Race of Āryas”. In the *Rgveda* VI.18.3 Indra is said to have explained as *ārya varṇa* as “Race of Āryas”.¹⁹ In the *Rgveda* VI.25.2, there is a reference to *dasih visah* who are said to have been subdued by Indra to the Ārya.²⁰ In the *Rgveda* X.49.3, Indra is said not to have given up Ārya *nāma* to Dasyu.²¹ Udgītha takes *āryam nāma* to mean the ‘name of Indra, the ruler of all the three regions.²² Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa take it to mean ‘the water which is for Āryas’.²³ Indra never gives the water to Dasyu, which is for Āryas. Sāyaṇa, optionally, also takes it to mean the ‘adorable name’.²⁴

In the *Rgveda* I.117.21, the Aśvins are said to have produced far-spreading light for the Ārya blasting away the Dasyu with their trumpet. Here, too by *dasyu* Sakandasvāmin means *ānārya* and Sāyaṇa as *upakṣayakāriṇam*. By *āryāya* Skandasvāmin means for the favour of Ārya, i.e., ‘person of good conduct’ (*sādhu-nāmanugrahārtham*). Sāyaṇa here takes *āryāya* to mean ‘for wise one’ or for

17. दस्यून् हत्वा त्रैवर्णिकान् प्र आवत् । Veṅkaṭamādhava on *Rv.*III-34-9

दस्यून् बाधकान् असुरान् हत्वा आर्यम् उत्तमं वर्णं त्रैवर्णिकं प्र आवत् । यथा कर्मविघ्नो न भवेतपालयत् ।

Sāyaṇa on *Rv.*III-34-9

18. यो दासं वर्णमधरं गुहाकः *Rv.*II-12-4

19. त्वं ह तु त्यददमायो दस्यूरैकः कृष्टीरवनोरायायि । *Rv.*VI-18-3

20. अभिर्विश्वा अभियुजो विषूचीरायायि विशोऽवतीरीदसीः । *Rv.*VI-25-2

21. अह शृण्णस्य श्नथिता वधर्यमं न यो रर आर्य नाम दस्यहे । *Rv.*X-49-3

22. आर्य नाम अर्यस्येदम् आर्यम् । अर्यस्य त्रिभुवनेश्वरस्य मम नाम इन्द्र इत्येतत् । Udgītha on *Rv.*X-49-3

23. आर्य आर्यसम्बन्धि आर्याणां देयमित्यर्थः तादृशं नाम । उदकनामैतत् नामकमुदकं दस्यवे शत्रवे उपक्षपयित्रे न रे दत्तकमस्मि -आर्याणां देयम् उदकम् असुराय । Sāyaṇa on *Rv.*X-49-3

24. यद्वा । आर्य पूज्यमित्यसाथारणं नाम शत्रवे न दत्तवान्नास्मि । Sāyaṇa on *Rv.*X-49-3

Manu. In the *Rgveda* II 11.18, Indra is said to have uncovered the light for the Ārya sinking the Dasyu in his left hand.²⁵ In the *Rgveda* VII 5.6, Agni is said to have dispelled the Dasyus from their place producing great light for the Ārya.²⁶ Here by *āryāya* Veṅkaṭamādhava means for people' (*ānārya manusyāya*) and Sāyaṇa as 'deedful person' (*karmavate-janāya*). In the *Rgveda* X.43.4, Indra is prayed for bestowing *āryam jyotiḥ* to the people.²⁷ Here, Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa render *āryam* as *preyam* an adjective of light. Udgītha takes *āryam* the 'powers of Indra'.²⁸ In the *Rgveda* I, 59.2 Vaiśvānara Agni is said to have been produced by the gods to be verily the light for the Ārya.²⁹ Here, Sāyaṇa as usual takes *ārya* to mean a scholar, Manu or a sacrificer (*āryāya viduṣe manave yajamānāya vā*). In the *Rgveda* VIII.33.7, there is a reference to three *āryah prajāḥ* having light before them.³⁰ Here, according to Sāyaṇa, three *āryāḥ prajāḥ* refer to three noble creatures, viz. Vasu, Rudra, and Ādityas.³¹

In the *Rgveda* VI.130.8, Indra is said to have protected in the battlefield the Ārya who offers sacrifices.³² Here *yajamānatva* 'the performership of the sacrifice' is referred to as a distinctive feature of an Ārya. Veṅkaṭamādhava here takes *āryam* to mean *traivarnikam*,

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25. अपावृणोज्योतिरार्यायि नि स्वयतः सादि दस्युरिन्द्रः । *Rv.II-11-18*
 26. त्वं दस्यूरोक्सो अग्न आज उरुज्योतिर्जनयत्तार्यायि । *Rv.VII-5-6*
 27. प्रैषामनीकं शवसा दविद्युतद्विदत् स्वर्मनवे ज्योतिरार्यम् । *Rv.X-43-4*
 28. आर्यम् आर्यस्य सर्वस्य जगतः स्वामिनः इन्द्रस्य स्वभूतिमिन्दत्वं च प्रापयीत्यर्थः ।
 Udgīta on *Rv.X-43-4*
 29. तं त्वा देवासोऽजनयन्त देवं वैश्वानर ज्योतिरिदार्यायि । *Rv.I-59-2*
 30. त्रयः कृणवन्ति भुवनेषु रेतस्तिस्वः प्रजा आर्या ज्योतिराग्रा । *Rv.VII-33-7*
 31. भुवनेषु प्रतिव्यन्तरिक्षद्युषु त्रयः अग्निवायुसूर्याः यथाक्रमेण रेतः विश्वस्य धारकमुदकं कृणवन्ति कुर्वन्ति ।
 तेषां त्रयाणां ज्योतिख्याः आदित्य प्रमुखाः आर्याः श्रेष्ठाः तिस्त्रः प्रजा भवन्ति ।
 Sāyaṇa on *Rv.VII-33-7*
 32. इन्द्रः समत्सु यजमानमार्यं प्रवद्विश्वषु शतमूतिराजिषु । *Rv.I-130-8*

i.e., belonging to three classes of people - Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya and Vaiśya. Sāyaṇa explains āryam as “approachable by all’ (*āryam araniyam sarvair gantavyam*). In the *Rgveda* 1.156.5, Viṣṇu is said to have given the Ārya, the sacrificer, the share of *Rta*.³³ To follow the path of *Rta* here referred to is another main characteristic feature of the Ārya. According to Sāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, the dweller of three regions, is said to have made the Ārya pleased and given the fruit of the sacrifice to him.³⁴ In the *Rgveda* IV.26.2, Indra is reported as himself saying that he has given land to the Ārya, rain and bellowing waters to the sacrificing people.³⁵

Here *dāsuṣe martyāya* seems to be explanation of *āryāya* given by the seer himself. Veṅkaṭamādhava renders *āryāya* to *panditāya* and Sāyaṇa as *Manave*, for Manu.’ In the *Rgveda* VII. 18.17, Indra is said to have brought the cows of the Ārya for the Tr̄tsus killing the enemies in the battle.³⁶ Veṅkaṭamādhava takes *ārya* here as referring to Turvaśa, and Sāyaṇa as to *karmaśīla*. In the *Rgveda* VIII. 103. 1 Agni is mentioned as the increaser of the Ārya.³⁷ Here Veṅkaṭamādhava by *āryāya* understands *āryasya varṇasya* and Sāyaṇa as *uttamavarṇasya*. In the *Rgveda* IX.63.5³⁸ Soma is mentioned as flowing forth making all ‘Ārya’. Veṅkaṭamādhava takes *āryam* to mean *kalyāṇam* and Sāyaṇa as *bhadram*. The phrase *kṛṇvanto viśvam āryam*

33. वेदा अजिन्वत् त्रिष्ठस्था आर्यमृतस्य भागे यजमानमाभजत् । *Rv.I-156-8*

आर्यम् आगन्तव्यं यजमानम् अजिन्वत् प्रीणयति ।त्रृतस्य यज्ञस्य भागो हुतशेषरूपे तं यजमानम् ।
Rv.I-157-2

34. आभजत् समीपयतीत्यर्थः ।

अहमपो अनयं वावशाना मम देवासो अनुकेतमायन् । *Rv.IV-26-2*

36. आ योऽनयत्सदमा आर्यस्य गव्या तृत्सुभ्यो अजग्न् युधा नृन् । *Rv.VIII-18-7*

37. उपो षु जातमार्यस्य वर्धनमग्निं नक्षत्त नो गिरः । *Rv.VIII-103-1*

38. इन्द्रं वर्धन्तो असुरः कृष्णसो विश्वमार्यम् । अपग्न्तो अराव्यः । *Rv.IX-63-5*

is most often used to express taking the entire universe Ārya'. In the *Rgveda* X.65.11, Viśvedevāḥ are mentioned as spreading the āryāvṛata over the land.³⁹ Udgītha takes ārya vrata to mean 'godly deeds', such as Agnihotra, etc.⁴⁰ Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa, by ārya vrata mean kalyāñāni karmāṇi. Griffith takes it to mean the righteous laws of Aryan. In the *Rgveda* IX 63.14 Soma is mentioned as flowing forth to the dwellings of Aryas with streams of water.⁴¹ In the *Rgveda* X. 11.4, there is an explicit mention of aryāviśāḥ. Here it is said that when the Ārya people chose Agni as invoking priest, then the act like performance of sacrifice started.⁴² Udgītha and Sāyaṇa take āryāḥ to mean yajamānāḥ.

From the above survey of meanings of the word ārya as given by the Indian commentators of the *Rgveda* it would be clear that this word conveys assigned various meanings but everywhere it gives a good sense. We may classify these meanings into four groups:-

- (i) svāmi (V, S) vidvān (S), paṇḍita (V), anuṣṭhātā (S), sādhu (Sk) sādhu-vṛtta (Sk), yajmāna (V.S.) yāgapara (Sk), yaṣṭā (Sk), stotā (S), karmānuṣṭhātṛ-jana (S), karmakṛt-jana (S), karmayukta (S), karmavat (S), karmaśila (S), kulīna (Udg), abhijna (Udg), abhigamanīya (Udg, S), aranīya (S), sarvaih gantavya (S), agantavya (S).
- (ii) Manu (V.S.), Manusya (V), tribhuvaneśvara, Indra (Udg).

39. ब्रह्म गामश्वं जनयन्त ओषधीर्वनस्पतीन्पृथिवीं पर्वतौं अप।

सूर्य दिवि रोहयन्त सुधानव आर्या व्रता विसृजन्तो अधि क्षभि। *Rv.X-65-11*

40. आर्या आर्याणि। आर्याः ईश्वराः साधनवन्तः अधिकृन्मनुष्याः Udgītha on *Rv.X-65-11*

41. एते धामान्यार्या श्रुका ऋतस्य धारया। वाजं गोमन्तमक्षरन्। *Rv.IX-63-14*

42. यदी विशो वृणते दस्ममार्या अग्निं होतारमध्य धीरजायत। *Rv.X-11-4*

(iii) *śreṣṭha* (S) *bhadra* (S), *kalyāṇakarma* (V), *prerya* (V. S) *Pujya* (S), *prakāśa* (V).

(iv) *traivarṇika* (V, S), *uttama varṇa* (V, S).

On the other hand the word *dāsa* or *dasyu* has been given opposite meanings to Ārya, such as

(i) *anuṣṭāhātṛṇām upakṣapayitā, upakṣayakāri, karmānupa-*
kṣapayitā, bādhaka, śatru, asura, karmahīna-jana, karmavirodhī,
asadācāra, akulīna, etc.

(ii) *anārya, śūdra, karmakara* (servant) etc.

On the basis of opposite meanings of the words *ārya* and *dāsa* or *dasyu*, scholars have been led to propound different theories regarding the Ārya and the Dāsas. Griffith in the footnote to the *Rgveda* 1.51.8, writes, the Āryas are, first the people who speak the languages of Veda and Dāsyus are the original and huddle people of India. Later, the former are the true and loyal people, faithful to India and the gods, and, the latter are the wicked and godless. This is not the view of Griffith only.

3. The River Sarasvatī : Identification based on the Rgvedic Geography

In the *Rgveda*, some of *sūktas* are seen exclusively devoted to eulogize Sarasvatī. (*Rv.* VII-95; VI-61). In its historical notion one can identify Sarasvatī in the *Rgveda* as a river. It was originally stood for the stage of the Rgvedic civilization. The mighty streams of the Sarasvatī are described in several places of the *Rgveda*.¹ It is also considered as divine for the sacredness of its waters. In the post-Vedic period it is regarded as the personified form of the goddess of speech (*Vāk-devi*), learning and eloquence. At first, the Vedic seers rendered the river Sarasvatī to be goddess and later on projected their concepts into a significant and physical form. This concept of Sarasvatī as a river-goddess is also endorsed by Yāska.²

There were many rivers in the country of the Rgvedic Aryans, but the Sarasvatī was best among them.³ The seers dwelling along its banks, might have been immensely impressed by its mighty stream, rhythmic flow, congenial waters and the like. This might have evoked much praise for it. It was, probably, for such reasons that the Sarasvatī occupied, a very pious phase even in the sacrifices. In the context of sacrifices this river was regarded as mother and subsequently as a goddess. Godhood ascribed to it is on *par* with the Gaṅgā, which is regarded as a mother-goddess (*Gaṅgā-māta*), in later literature.

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1. *Rv.* I-3-12; II-41-16; III-23-4 ; V-42-12; VII-36-6 ; 96-1-2; VIII-21-17,18; 54-4; X-17-7 ; 64-9; 75-5; etc.
 2. तत्र सरस्वत्येकस्य नदीवद् देवतावाक् च निगम भवन्ति । Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-23
 3. *Rv.* II-41-16



The Description of Sarasvatī in the *Rgveda* :

In the *Rgveda*, Sarasvatī has been described both as a river and as a river-goddess. So far her anthropomorphic feature in the *Rgveda* is concerned, this is possible only in its capacity of river rather than of a goddess. Also her anthropomorphism has been virtually carried out in the epics and the *Purāṇas*.

Of course, the *Rgveda* does not describe in clear terms the various parts such as hands, mouth, legs, eyes, breasts etc. These descriptions are found in the post-Vedic literature. But the ascription of limbs had begun even in the time of the *Rgveda*. The waves (*ūrmayah*) of the Sarasvatī river are poetically conceived as its hands. It digs up its banks with its waves as a man digs up lotus-roots (*bisakha-iva*). With its hands of waves it is described as tearing down the peaks of mountains.⁴

There are some *mantras* in the *Rgveda*, describing the beauty of Sarasvatī, which is implied by the terms like, *Saumyā*,⁵ *Śubhrā*,⁶ *Supeśas*⁷ etc.

There are Vedic terms, which speak of the mental status of Sarasvatī. Of them '*dhiyāvasuh*',⁸ '*codayitri sunṛtānam*',⁹ and '*cetanti sumatinām*',¹⁰ deserve special attention.

In the *Rgveda*, special aspects of Sarasvatī are described she is delineated as a mother, sister, wife, daughter and friend.

4. *Rv. VI-61-2*

5. *Rv. IX-81-4*

6. *Rv. V-42-12*

7. *Rv. IX-5-8*

8. *Rv. I-3-10*

9. *Ibid*

10. *Rv. I-3-11*

As such the words presenting Sarasvatī as a mother are : ‘*sindhu-mātā*,¹¹ ‘*ambitamā*,¹² and ‘*mātā*.¹³

So also, some epithets present Sarasvatī as a sister : ‘*saptasvasā*,¹⁴ ‘*saptadhātuḥ*,¹⁵ ‘*saptathī*,¹⁶ *triṣadhaṣṭhā*,¹⁷ and ‘*svsrr anyā ṛtāvati*.¹⁸

The aspect of Sarasvatī as a wife is brought out by the following epithets : ‘*vīraptni*,¹⁹ ‘*vṛṣṇah patni*,²⁰ and ‘*marutvati*.²¹

The aspect of Sarasvatī as a daughter is also not worked out in detail in the *Rgveda*. But it is implied by the epithet *pāvīravi*.²²

There are a few attributes such as ‘*marutsakhā*,²³ ‘*sakhījā*,²⁴ and ‘*uttara sakhibhyah*,²⁵ which present Sarasvatī as a friend.

Various functions of Sarasvatī have been described in the *Rgveda*. The wealth has been one of the foremost of these functions. The following attributes of Sarasvatī as the giver of wealth : ‘*ratnadhā*, *śāśayah*,²⁶ ‘*vasuvid*, ‘*rāyas cetanti*.²⁷

11. *Rv.* VII-36-6

12. *Rv.* II-41-16

13. *Rv.* X-64-9

14. *Rv.* VI-61-10

15. *Rv.* VI-61-12

16. *Rv.* VII-36-6

17. *Rv.* VI-61-12

18. *Rv.* VI-61-9

19. *Rv.* VI-49-7

20. *Rv.* V-42-12

21. *Rv.* II-30-8

22. *Rv.* VI-49-7; X-65-13

23. *Rv.* VII-96-2

24. *Rv.* VI-61-14

25. *Rv.* VII-95-4

26. *Rv.* I-164-49

27. *Rv.* VII-95-2

The words ‘*Mayobhūh*’ or in plural ‘*mayobhurah*’²⁸ speak of her as the giver of pleasure.

The *Rgvedic* people desired brave progeny, and like other deities, Sarasvatī was also prayed therefore. *Sinīvāli* is the presiding deity of fertility and growth. She is, thus, the goddess bestowing progeny.²⁹

Among many things granted by Sarasavtī, food is very important and prominent gift. The epithets ‘*Vājinīvati*³⁰’ and ‘*Vājini*³¹’ speak of her as granting food.

The following terms bring to light some of the special features of the personality of Sarasvatī : *Pāvakā*³², *Gṛtaci*³³, *Pārāvatāghni*³⁴, *Citrayuh*³⁵, *Hiraṇyavartini*³⁶, *Asuryā*³⁷, *Dharuṇamayāsi Pūh*³⁸, *Akavāri*.³⁹

It is beyond doubt true that Sarasvatī, in the *Rgveda*, has been described both as a river and as a river-goddess. So far as her anthropomorphic feature in the *Rgveda* is concerned, this is possible only in its capacity of a river rather than of a goddess. Her anthropomorphism has been virtually carried out in the epics and the *Purāṇas*.

28. *Rv.* I-13-9

29. *Rv.* I-164-49

30. *Rv.* I-3-10; VI-61-4; VII-96-3

31. *Rv.* V-61-6

32. *Rv.* I-3-10

33. *Rv.* I-2-7; 167-3; III-6-1; 19-2; 30-7; IV 6-3, etc

34. *Rv.* VI-61-2

35. *Rv.* VI-49-7

36. *Rv.* VI-61-7

37. *Rv.* VII-96-1

38. *Rv.* VII-95-1

39. *Rv.* VII-95-3

The Geographical Descriptions of the River Sarasvatī:

The *Rgveda* contains various references of Sarasvatī as a river. The *Nadīstuti* hymn in the *Rgveda*, mentions a set of rivers, from the Gaṅga in the east and Sindhu in the west.⁴⁰ Here, Sarasvatī is mentioned between the Yamunā and the Śutudri (Sutlej).

Another important information that the *Rgveda* describes it as flowing from the mountains and reaching the sea. The *Rgveda* says-

“Purest amongst all the rivers and vibrant, the Sarasvatī moves on from the mountains to the ocean; manifesting immense riches of the world, She has provided milk and ghee to Nahuṣa.”⁴¹

It is clear that the R̄gvedic Sarasvatī was a mighty river, originating in the mountains and flowing all the way down to the ocean.

The geographical fact that the Sarasvatī was indeed mighty rivers and it is described by many other *mantras* in the *Rgveda*. eg.,

“This (Sarasvatī river) has shattered the mountain peaks with her fast and powerful waves, just (as easily) as one uproots the lotus-steam; let us invoke her, who strikes what is far and near, with holy hymns and prayers.”⁴²

“Whose (i.e of the Sarasvatī) boundless, impetuous and swift-moving flood gushes forth with a tempestuous roar.”⁴³

40. *Rv. X-75 5,6*

41. एकाचेत्सरस्वती नदीनां शुचिर्यती गिरिभ्यः आ समुद्रात्।

रायश्चेतन्ती भुवनस्य भूरेधृतं पयो दुदुहे नाहुषाय ॥ *Rv. VII-95-2*

42. इयं शुष्मेभिर्बिसखा इवारुजत्सानु गिरिणां तविषेभिरुर्मिभिः।

पारावतानीमप्से सुवृक्तिभिः सरस्वतीमा विवासेम धीतिभिः ॥ *Rv. VI-61-2*

43. यस्य अनन्तो आहुतस्त्वेषश्वरिष्णुर्णवः। अमश्चरति रोरुवत् ॥ *Rv. VI-61-8*

She was also fed by many tributaries, as indicated by the epithets as ‘*Saptasvasā*’ (having seven sisters or having one of the seven sisters). It states- “To us the dearest amongst the dear ones, seven-sistered, (the Sarasvatī) has earned our hymns of praise.”⁴⁴

These seven sisters (rivers) were difficult to determine. But, the Drṣadvatī and Āpayā have been two of them, as mentioned in a Rgvedic *mantra*.

“O Agni, I have established you at the best place on the earth, in the dwelling of Ilā on this most auspicious days; may you shine brilliantly amongst the descendants of Manu, on the banks of the Drṣadvatī, Āpayā, and Sarasvatī.”⁴⁵

The Rgvedic Aryans regarded her, as a heavenly diety. Many of the Rgvedic *mantras* have indicated this. For example:

“May the venerable Sarasvatī come to our sacrifice from the heavens and high mountains; may she, filled with ghee, accept our oblations and listen to our devotional hymns.”⁴⁶

“O Sarasvatī, the best of mothers, the best of rivers, the best of goddesses, we are unknown insignificant, please favour us with fame, O mother.”⁴⁷

44. उत नः प्रिया प्रियासु सप्तस्वसा सुजुष्टा । सरस्वती स्तोम्या भूत् ॥ *Rv.* VI-61-10

45. नि त्वा दधे वर आ पृष्ठिव्या इलायास्यदे सुदिनत्वे अह्नाम् ।

दृषद्वत्यां मनुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदने दिदीहि । *Rv.* III-23-4

46. आ नो दिवो बृहतः पर्वतादा सरस्वती यजता गन्तु यज्ञम् ।

हवं देवी जुजुषाणा धृताची शगमं नो वाचमुशती शृणोतु ॥ *Rv.* V-43-11

47. अम्बीतमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वती ।

अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसी प्रशस्तिमम्ब नस्कृथि ॥ *Rv.* II-41-16

It is clear that she has been regarded as the best of mothers (*ambitame*), as the best of the rivers (*naditame*) and as the most respectable deity (*devitame*).

From the concept of a river regarded as deity, she was mentioned alongside other deities. This is clear from a Rgvedic *mantra*. “O gods-Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Maruts, and Viṣṇu, give us strength; o the two Nāsatyas, Rudra, the divine females, Puṣan, Bhaga, Sarasvatī, be pleased.”⁴⁸

Historical Facts :

The location of Sarasvatī can also be ascertained on the basis of historical evidences furnished by the *Rgveda*. The *Rgveda* refers to many kings residing along the banks of the Sarasvatī. A *mantra* states :

“Along the Sarasvatī, Citra indeed is the king, whereas others are only petty rulers; just as Parjanya gives plenty of rain, so has he (Citra) given a thousand, nay a myriad, gifts.”⁴⁹

The *Rgveda*, also mentions five tribes as brought up by the Sarasvatī.⁵⁰ The dwelling of the Purus by the banks of the Sarasvatī is also referred to in the *Rgveda* itself.⁵¹

According to *Rgveda*, this river was associated with king Nahuṣa.⁵² Another *mantra* says that the Sarasvatī gave the famous Vedic king Divodāsa, and Vṛdhrayaśva.⁵³

48. अग्न इन्द्र वरुण मित्र देवाः शर्थः प्र यन्तु मारुतोत विष्णो ।

उभा नासत्या रुद्रो अथ ग्नाः पूषा भगः सरस्वती जुषन्त ॥ *Rv.* V-46-2

49. चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु ।

पर्जन्य इव ततनद्वि वृष्ट्या सहस्रमयुता ददत् ॥ *Rv.* VIII-21-18

50. त्रिष्ठस्था सप्तधातु पञ्च जाता वर्धयन्ती ॥ *Rv.* VI-61-12

Rv. VII-95-2 ; VII-96-2; VIII-21-18 etc.

51. उभे यत्ते महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षीयन्ति पूरवः । *Rv.* VII-96-2

52. *Rv.* VII-95-2

53. *Rv.* VI-61-1

All these allusions to the kings and tribes tell us of the antiquity of the Sarasvatī and their close relation with it.

The Identification and Location of the Sarasvatī : A Modern Approach

The R̄gvedic mighty river Sarasvatī could not maintain its flow and it disappeared long ago. This has attracted attention of the scholars and several of them investigated the whereabouts of the river Sarasvatī. This is a controversial subject of the modern scholars and historians.

Roth identifies the R̄gvedic Sarasvatī with the Indus river. The Vedic Index states - "Roth, held that another river, the Sindhu (Indus), was really meant only this could it be explained why the Sarasvatī is called 'the foremost of rivers (*nadirame*)', is said to go to the ocean, and is referred to as a large river, on the banks of which many kings, and indeed, the fire tribes, were located. This view is accepted by Zimmer and others."⁵⁴

Roth's view has no standing, because the Sarasvatī and Sindhu rivers are mentioned in the *R̄gveda* as independent rivers, and of them, Sarasvatī is highly eulogised. The *R̄gveda* uses the word 'Sindhu' more often for mere stream but the word appears to have been used for the Sindhu river also.⁵⁵ The case of Sarasvatī has been different in that as it has been called "*Sindhumaṭa*" (the mother of Streams),⁵⁶ This epithet which apparently described it as even greater than the Sindhu. If the word 'Sindhu' denotes the Sindhu river, it should be accepted

54. Macdonel and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p.435

55. *Rv.* I-122-6 ; 126-1; IV-54-6; V-53-9 etc.

56. आ यत्साकं यशसो वावशानाः सरस्वती सप्तथी सिन्धुमाता ॥ *Rv.* VII-36-6

the Sarasvatī as the greater river on account of its being treated as its mother.

According to Max Muller, the Vedic Sarasvatī is the modern Sarsūti. He says "In the enumeration of rivers (evidently from east to west) in Rv. X-75-5, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Śutudri, the Sarasvatī comes between the Jamna and Sutlej, the position of the modern Sarsūti (Sarasvatī), which flowing to the west of Thanesar, is joined in Patiala territory by a more westerly stream, the ghaggar, and passing Sirsa, is lost in the desert at Bhatnair; but a dry river bed (Hakra or Ghaggar) can be traced from that point to the Indus."⁵⁷

A.C. Das writes that 'the Sarasvatī, however, never flowed into Indus, but directly into the sea, like the Indus. It was an independent river, and the marks of the old bed, still discernible in the sands, do not point to its conjunction with the Indus.'⁵⁸

The Ṛgvedic culture has been interpreted by most western scholars and many of their Indian followers. Thus, holding on to the notion of a west-to-east movement, these scholars believe that if there is anything common between the Avestā, which is an ancient Iranian text, and the *Rgveda*, which lay further east in India, it is the Avestan evidence that must take precedence over the Ṛgvedic.

Rajesh Cochar writes - 'we have argued that the Ghaggar system was already defunct in the Ṛgvedic times and that otherwise also it does not fit in the Ṛgvedic description. We must

57. Macdonel and Keith , *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-435 fn.16

58. A.C. Das, *Rgvedic India*, Calcutta, 1927, p-7 fn.1

therefore look to the west of the Indus to locate the *naditamā* Sarasvati. For clue, we once again turn to the Avestā. The Avestan Harahvaiti, phonetically the same as Sarasvati, was known to Greeks as *Etymander* and is now called Arghandab. Vedic Sarasvati, however, is to be equated not with the Arghandab but with the Helmand, of which the Arghandab is the main tributary.”⁵⁹

Another Indian historian and archaeologist R.S. Sharma writes - ‘The Sarasvati receives much attention in the *Rgveda* and several *Suktas* are devoted to it; so they want to use it for their purpose. But it seems that there are several Sarasvatis, and the earliest Sarasvati cannot be identified with the Hakra and the Ghaggar. In the *Rgveda* the Sarasvati is called the best of the rivers (*naditamā*). It seems to have been a great river with perennial water. The Hakra and the Ghaggar cannot much fit. The earliest Sarasvati is considered identical with the Helmand in Afghanistan which is called Harakhwati in the Avestā.’⁶⁰

He still goes on - “In any case the linguistic and time-place proximity of the Avestā to the *Rgveda* leaves no doubt that the early Vedic Sarasvati is the same as the Harakhwati or the Helmand. As the Vedic people expanded they took the name Sarasvati to Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan and also to Garhwal, Prayaga and Rajgir.”⁶¹

These different views of the scholars are untenable. B.B. Lal, has rejected this view on the basis of the *Rgvedic* descriptions. In this context, his words may be quoted:

59. Rajesh Cochar : *The Vedic People*, p-129

60. R.S. Sharma : *Advent of the Aryans in India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1999
p-35

61. Ibid.

In the first place, the R̄gvedic Sarasvatī lay between the Yamunā on the one hand and the Sutlej on the other.⁶² As mentioned in the *nadiṣtuti* hymn of the *R̄gveda*, the names are mentioned serially in that text, from the Gaṅgā in the east to the Indus in the west, and this should leave no doubt in the mind of anyone about the geographical location of the R̄gvedic Sarasvatī.⁶³ It shows that there is no Yamunā or Sutlej in Afghanistan.

Secondly, the *R̄gveda* mentions Dr̄śadvati and Āpayā as the tributaries of the Sarasvatī.⁶⁴ These two rivers are in Harayana (India) and not in Afghanistan.

Thirdly, the R̄gvedic Sarasvatī stated to have originated in the mountains and debouched in the ocean.⁶⁵ The Helmand of Afghanistan does not at all meet this requirement. It is far away from the ocean.

Fourthly, besides the geographical factors mentioned above, there are some others, which call for attention. For example the *R̄gveda* refers to a king Citra as having lived on the bank of the Sarasvatī. Likewise, according to *R̄gveda*, this river was associated with king Nahuṣa⁶⁶ and she gave Divodāsa, the famous Vedic king, to Vṛdhrayaśva.⁶⁷ Again, the *R̄gveda* shows that five specific 'peoples' lived in the Sarasvatī valley,⁶⁸ of whom one has clearly been stated to have been the Pūrus, in the *R̄gveda*.⁶⁹

62. *Rv.* X-75-5

63. B.B. Lal : *The Saraswati Flows on*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2002, pp-9-10

64. *Rv.* III-23-4

65. *Rv.* VII-95-2

66. *Rv.* VII-95-2

67. *Rv.* VI-61-1

68. *Rv.* VI-96-2

69. *Rv.* VI-96-2

These kings are mentioned in the *Rgveda*, and they were associated with the Sarasvatī, and it is not in the Avesta. It is clear that the R̄gvedic Sarasvatī is not identical with the Harakhvati of Avesta, which flows in Afghanistan.

Another view-point of the some western and Indian scholars are inclined to apply Sarasvatī to the Indus. But this identification cannot be acceptable.

The river Sarasvatī is described in the seventh *mandala* of the *Rgveda*, as flowing rapidly with all sustaining waters, sweeping away in its might,s all other waters and flowing through the mountains up to the ocean distributing riches to the vast world.⁷⁰ As the description in the former mantra does not agree with the little stream taken as the river Sarasvatī,⁷¹ scholars are inclined to apply it to the Indus.

While dealing with the another *mantra*,⁷² Griffith, in his translation of *Rgveda*, observes as below :

She : Sarasvatī as a river. The description given in the text can hardly apply to the small stream generally known under that name ; and from this and other passages which will be noticed as they this and other passages which will be noticed as they occur it seems probable that Sarasvatī is also another name Sindhu or the Indus."⁷³

Griffith's this reference has been followed by western scholars and some Indian ones too uphold this view. Two Indian ones too

70. *Rv. VI-95-2*

71. A..A.. Macdonell, *The Vedic Mythology*, Varanasi, 1963, p-86

72. *Rv. VI-61-2*

73. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, Vol.I, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1995, p-631, Foot note

uphold this view. Ifran Habib and Faiz Habib, state that there were three Sarasvatīs, the first one being the Helmand of Afghanistan, the second the Indus and the third the present-day Sarasvatī running through Haryana, Rajasthan etc.

Arguing their case for the Sarasvatī being the Helmand of Afghanistan the Habibs state :

"But it seems likely that Sarasvatī / Harakhvati was the name for the Helmand, above its junction with Arghandab. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how Sarasvati could be put between Sindhu and Sarayū, i.e. the Indus and Harirud, as major intervening river in *Rv. X-64.9*"⁷⁴

These scholars have followed Griffith's translation of the *mantra*. Which runs as follows :

"Let the great stream come hither with their mighty help,
Sindhu, Sarasvatī and Sarayū with waves."⁷⁵

Actually, the Rgvedic *mantra* does not put the Sarasvatī between the other two rivers. It reads " सरस्वती सरयुः सिन्धुरूर्मिभिर्महो महीरवसा यन्तु वक्षणीः। (*Rv. X-64-9.*)

So, observation of the scholars mentioned above has totally confessed.

The Correct Identification of River Sarasvatī :

Above mentioned discussion has concluded that the Helmand of the Afghanistan cannot be taken to be the Rvedic Sarasvatī. The fact that the Indus also cannot be identified with that the

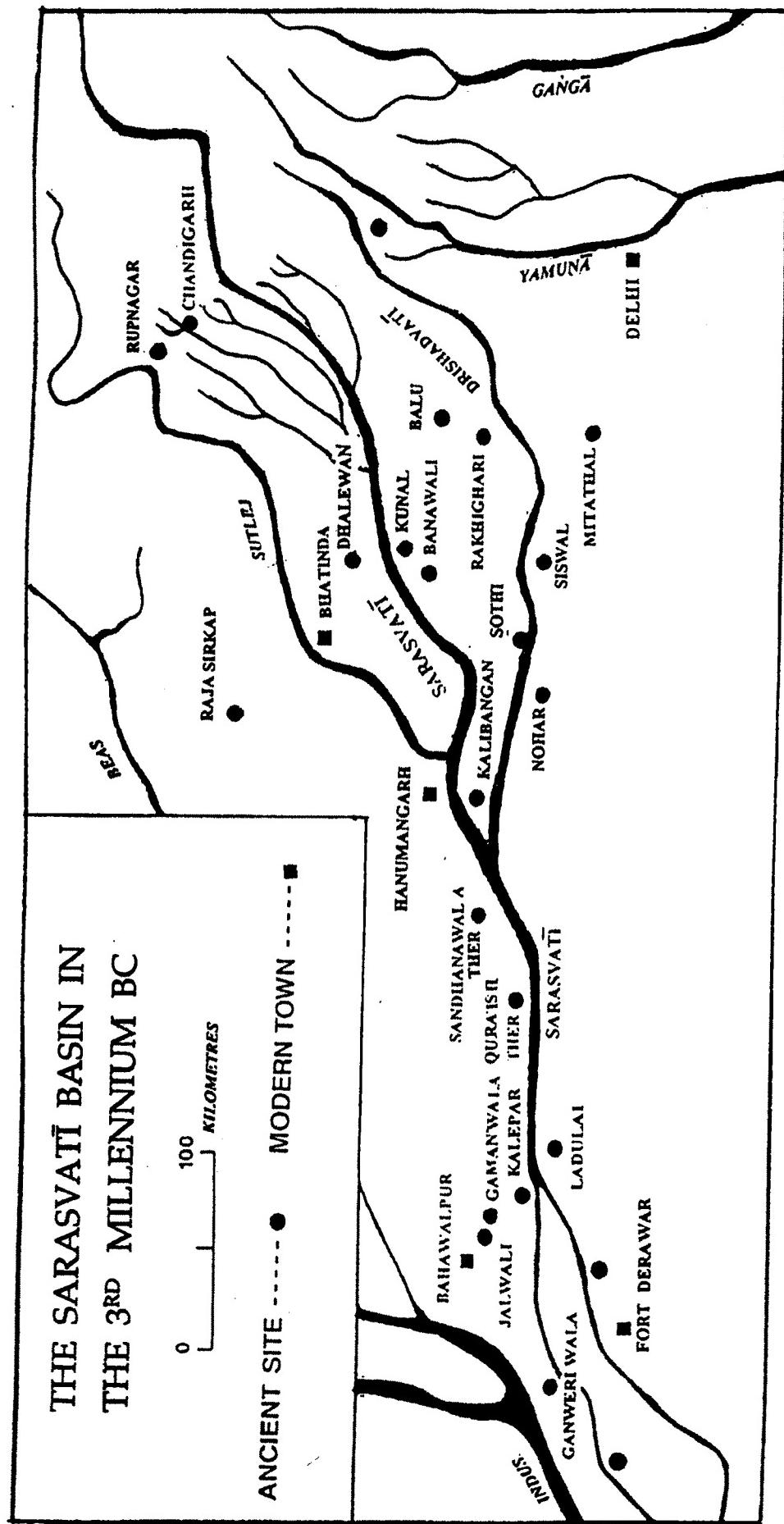
74. Ifran Habib and Fiaz Habib , *The Historical Geography of India, 1800-800 B.C.*, Proceeding Indian History Congress, 52 session, 1991-92, p-76

75. Griffith , *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, Vol.2, as Tr. on *Rv. X-64-9*

Vedic Sarasvatī. It is clearly shown by the R̄gvedic evidence itself. In this connection B.B. Lal observes:

In first place, as the *R̄gveda* says (*Rv.X - 75-5*), the Sarasvatī lays between the Yamunā and the Śutudri. Today there is a river called the Sarasvatī which runs between the just mentioned two rivers and thus fulfill the first condition. It originates at the foot of the Siwalik hills and flows southwestwards in Haryana where it passes by the towns of Popli, Kurukshetra and Pehowa, after which it joins the Ghaggar. This combined stream proceeds further down but dries up near Sirsa. Thereafter only its dry bed can be identified. It continues further southwestwards and is called the Ghaggar in northern Rajasthan. Further down, it goes by the name of Hakra in the Cholistan region of Pakistan. Thereafter it turns southwards and in Sindh its branches are variously called the Raini, Wahinda and Nara. Finally, as the available evidence suggests, it fell into the Rann of Kachch.

Secondly, the *R̄gveda* (III - 23-4) mentions the Dṛṣadvatī as being one of the tributaries of the Sarasvatī. And this is precisely so in the case of the Sarasvatī - Ghaggar combine. The Dṛṣadvatī, which also now is dried like the Sarasvatī, has been identified with the modern Chauntang, passing by the towns of Bhadra, Nohar etc. It joins the Sarasvatī - Ghaggar combine near Suratgarh. These, presentday Sarasvatī Ghaggar fulfils the second criterion also.



The feature referred to the *Rgveda* (VII - 95-2) , is that the Sarasvatī originated in the mountains and went all the way to the sea. That is the present day Sarasvatī Ghaggar combine finally joined the sea.

The origin of the Vedic Sarasvatī from the glaciers in the Himālays, which made it a perennial river on its own, and its being joined by the Sutlej from the north-west, indeed made it a formidable river. This is clearly indicated by its bed, though now dried, which was as much as 6-8 kilometres in width for quite some part of its length. And it is reflected in the *Rgveda*.

Vināśana (the Disappearance) of the Sarasvatī :

The *Rgveda* clearly mentions that the Sarasvatī had flowed down from the mountains and joined the ocean. But this mighty river could not maintain its flow and it disappeared long ago. Present day this river is dried up owing to geological changes. The place where it lost its existence, aptly called *Vināśana* or ‘ the disappearance ‘ of the Sarasvatī. Its disappearance has also been connected with the place Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa (Sarasvatī’s source). Macdonell and Keith observed - ‘In the *Rgveda Sūtras* the locality is called Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa, and it apparently meant to designate the source of the Sarasvatī rather than the place of its reappearance.’⁷⁶

The *Pancavimśa Brāhmaṇa* specifies the distance between *Vināśana* and the Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa. According to the *Pancavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, the Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa is at the distance of forty four *aśvinas* from *Vināśana*.⁷⁷

76. Macdonell and keith , *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-55

77. चतुश्वल्बारिंशदाश्विनानि सरस्वत्या विनाशनात् प्लाक्षः प्रास्त्रवणस्त्वाद् इतः स्वर्गो लोकः सरस्वती

सम्मितेनाद्वाना स्वर्गं लोकम् यान्ति । *Pancavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXV 10.16

Sāyaṇa explains ‘Āśvina’ as : एकोश्व एकेनहोत्त्रेण यावन्तम् अध्वानम् गच्छति तावत् एकाश्विनाः ।

The *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa* mentions the distance as forty four aśvinas which denotes the distance covered by a horseman in one day. But *aśvina* has not been accepted unanimously to be a specific measurement of length, but has been defined variously. In the *Atharvaveda*, the *aśvina* distance is held to exceed five *Yojanas*.⁷⁸

According to Patanjali, an average horse goes four *Yojanas*, while the superior one, eight *Yojanas* in a day.⁷⁹ On the other hand, Kautilya mentions three varieties of horses, of which the horse of the first variety travels the distance of six *Yojanas* in a day, that of the second variety, nine, and that of third, twelve.⁸⁰

There is divergence of opinion as to the actual distance of *Yojanas*. Generally one *Yojana* is believed to be of eight Krośas and one Krośa of two miles. It cannot be easy to decide the correct distance between *Plākṣa Prāsraraṇa* and *Vināśana*.

In the *Mahābhārata*, *Vināśana* is placed on the borders of the Śudras and the Ābhiras. The land of the Śudras is the place below the confluence of the Cenab and the Indus. *Vināśana* is beyond the borders of these two places.⁸¹

According to Manu "the Sarasvatī had ceased to reach the sea by that time by disappearing at a place called 'Vināśana'".⁸²

78. यद् धावसी त्रियोयनम् पञ्चयोजनाम् अश्विनाम्। *Atharvaveda*, VI-131-3

79. अश्वोऽयम् यश्चत्वारी योजनानि गच्छति, अश्वतरोयम् योऽष्टै योजनानि गच्छति। *Mahābhāṣya*, V-3-55

80. *Arthaśāstra*, II-30

81. Q. Raychaudhari H.C., *The Saraswati*, SC 8(12) July 1942 June 1943 Nos. 1-2, p-473

82. हिमद्विदयोर्मध्यं यत्प्राग्विनाशनादपि।

प्रत्यगेव प्रयागश्च मध्यदेशः प्रकीर्तिः।

आसमुद्रात् वै पूर्वदासमुद्रात् पश्चिमात्।

तयोरेवान्तरं गिर्योरार्यावर्ता विदुर्बुधाः॥ *Manusmṛti*, II 21-22

In the *Bhaudhāyana Dharmasūtras*, the region of Vināśana is mentioned as existing to the west of Āryāvarta which is to the west of the black-forest, to the north of the Pāripātra and to the south of the Himalayas.⁸³

In the later literature, Vināśana is held to exist near modern Sirsa in Kurukṣetra in the eastern Punjab (now in the Karnal District of Haryana). "In the early Vedic period, the Sarasvatī probably flowed into the Arbian Sea. Later literature speaks of its disappearance at Vināśana (near modern Sirsa) in Kurukṣetra or Brahmāvarta (in the eastern Punjab) which is described as the land between Sarasvatī and Drṣadvatī."⁸⁴

Thus, it may not be easy to identify the exact place where the Sarasvatī disappeared. But it is nevertheless clear that by the time of the *Pancavimśa Brāhmaṇa* the river had dried up.

But, 'when' and 'how' did such a mighty river stop flowing? B.B. Lal answered - "The Mature Harappan settlement at Kalibangan, located on the bank of the ancient Sarasvatī (now going by the name of the Ghaggar), had to be abandoned because of the drying up of the river that was once its life-giver. Radiocarbon dates clearly indicate that Kalibangan came to an end around 1900 B.C. And Since the site had to be abandoned because of the stoppage of water supply from the adjacent Sarasvatī river, it follows that the river dried up some time at the beginning of the second millennium B.C."

Further he answered second query, viz. that of 'how' ? - "To look for the factors that contributed to the disappearance of such

83. *Baudhayana Dharma Sūtra*, I-2-9

84. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII, No.3, p-216

a mighty river as the Sarasvatī we have once again to refer to the excellent evidence marshaled by Puri and Verma in the aforementioned paper. During the life-time of the Vedic Sarasvatī there was a major seismic activity, as a result of which there came up the Bata-Markkanda Divide, which is nearly 30m. in height. The net result was that the Sarasvati could no longer flow westwards into the Adh Badri opening, but had to reverse its direction to the east. And since not far off there was the Yamunā Tear opening, it provided another drainage. The mighty Sarasvatī met her end the hands of the Seismic Demon which, as if, throttled her by the Bata-Markanda divide and forced her out through the Yamunā Tear. The Himālaya-glacier-fed, perennial Sarasvatī having dried out, what survived was a rain-fed seasonal stream, starting off from the Siwalik foot-hills.”⁸⁵

85. B.B. Lal, *The Sarasvati Flows on*, p-23-24

4. Rgvedic Gleaning on Sindhu (Indus) Valley Civilization

Until as recently as 1922, ancient Indian history had little actual remains to offer Paleolithic as well as Neolithic finds, and Piprahwa relics which, belong to 5th Century B.C. approximately. The antiquity of Indian history and culture as gleaned from Vedic literature is also not supposed to go beyond the second millennium B.C. This was the scenario in spite of the fact that these did exist the Vedas which, even on a conservative estimate of Max Muller, were at least as old as 1200 B.C. But, 1921, the archaeological discoveries at Harappa, Mehenjodaro and other localities in Indus valley have pushed back this limit. India can now lay claim to the honour of being a pioneer of civilization along with Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, Egypt and Assyria.

On the basis of carbon-14 determinations, scholars get some idea of the chronological limits of Indus valley civilization. The Kot Diji culture stratigraphically Pre-Harappan, may have commenced about 2700 B.C. So far, there is no Carbon-14 determination for the early levels of Harappan culture, but it is clear that its end took place about 2000 B.C. at Kalibhangar, at Lothal in the 19th Century and Mehenjodaro about 1700 B.C.¹

Thus, when in the 1920 A.D. the Harappan civilization was discovered and dated to third millennium B.C. (on the basis of the occurrence of some Harappan antiquities in already dated contexts in Mesopotamia). It was assumed that, since Vedic civilization (as per the theory of MaxMuller) was only as old as 1200 B.C. The

1. B.B.Lal, 'A Picture Emerges : An Assessment of the Carbon-14 Dating of the Proto-Historic Cultures of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent' *Ancient India*, Nos. 18-19, 1962-63, pp. 269 to 221.

Harappan civilization could not have been that of the Sanskrit-speaking Vedic people. Since the only other major linguistic group that existed in India was that of the Dravidian-speaking people. It was but natural for Marshall and his colleagues to hold that the Harappan civilization belonged to these latter people.

This view of scholars, regarding the previous 'Aryan Invasion' was theory interpreted in different manner. It is generally believed that the authors of the Indus civilization as speakers of "Dravidian" and their civilization were destroyed by the Aryans, the Vedic people. This view is hold by some scholars on the basis of *Rgvedic* descriptions. Mortimer Wheeler writes- 'The Aryan invasion of the Land of seven Rivers, the Punjab and its environs, constantly assumes the form of an onslaught upon the walled cities of the aborigines. For these cities, the term used in the *Rgveda* is *pura*, meaning a 'rampart' 'fort' or 'stronghold'Indra, the Aryan war-god, is Purandara, 'fort-destroyer'. He shatters 'ninety forts' for Aryan protégé Divodāsa."²

Here, an archaeologist, B.B.Lal observes - "During the nine years of excavation at Mohenjodaro altogether thirty-seven skeletons, some fragmentary and some complete, had been found. All these came from lower town, where the commoners lived. None came from the citadel, the seat of government. It may be surprising to know that the 'invaders' spared the rules. Anyway, the more important point is that these skeletons came from different stratigraphic horizons; some from intermediate levels, some from late ones, while yet some others from deposits which accumulated after the abandonment of the site. If

2. Mortimer Wheeler, R.E.M., 1947. *Harappa* 1946 : The Defences and Cementery R-37. *Ancient India* 3; 58-130, p.82

these people were to die as a result of invasion, it may be expected that the skeletons would all be there in one stratum and that would naturally be the uppermost. Since then the site is said to have been abandoned. Added to the foregoing is the fact that a few of the skeletons bore cut-marks that had healed. Such a healing up is unlikely had the persons concerned, died in a (supposed) warfare. For the death would have been almost immediate, without leaving a long interval for the wounds to heal. And finally, no material remains whatsoever have been found at the site indicative of any warfare or even otherwise associable with any aliens.”³

The rejection of Wheeler’s hypothesis of Aryan invasion may be seen in following words : “All that I would like to mention is that the various objections raised against an Harappan-Aryan equation, are ill-founded. It is highly misleading to say that the Vedic Aryan were nomads. The *Rgveda* itself throws valuable light on the polity of the times, as indicated by the occurrence in it of such terms as *Sabhā*, *Samīti*, *Sāmrāt*, *Rājan*, *Rājaka* etc”.⁴ The first two terms clearly refer to assemblies that took vital decisions on matters of public interest, while the latter three terms point to a hierarchy of rulers. In the *Rgveda*, *Abhyāvarti Cāyamāna* is referred to as a *Sāmrāt*,⁵ and king Citra is said to be a mere *Rājan* and the epithet of other still inferior is *Rājaka*.⁶ These distinctions are not imaginary, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly states- अवरं हि राज्यं परं साप्राज्यम्। (V-I-1-12-13). It means that the office of *Rājan* is lower, and that of *Sāmrāt*, the higher. It is

3. B.B. Lal, *The Saraswati Flows on*, pp.69-70

4. Ibid, p.70

5. *Rv.* VI-27-8

6. *Rv.* VII-21-18

clear that it does not expect such fine distinction of governance in a nomadic society.

Marshall and other scholars consider the Indus valley civilization as different from the Rgvedic culture. Because the former is ignorant of the horse; but Rgvedic culture familiar with the horse. The evidence of the horse from Mehenjodaro remains, indicating the use of horse, have been found at Lothal, the famous Harappan site in Gujarat. A.D. Pusalkar says- 'Horse have also come to light from Mehenjodara.'⁷ Thus, the knowledge and use of horse were prevalent among the Indus valley people.

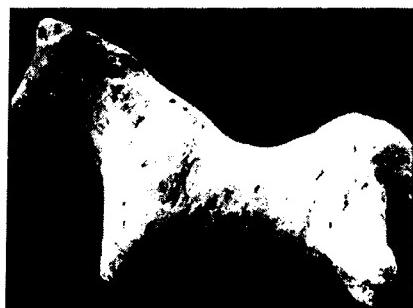


Fig.1 Surkotada : Horse Bones.Mature Harappan



Fig.2 Lothal: Terracotta horse. Mature Harappan

7. A.D. Pusalkar, *Vedic Age*, p.194

There is another argument that the wheel which is referred to in the Vedic texts, is stated to be absent during the Harappan periods. R.S. Sharma writes - 'There is no evidence for a spoked wheel at Harappa or Mohenjodaro where all the toy-carts found so far have solid wheels. Banawali in Hissar district in Haryana is associated with the use of the spoked wheels in the Harappa phase. According to its excavator, R.S.Bisht, a shard depicts a canopied cart with spoked wheels. But the painted shard produced by him shows seventeen parallel lines which appear to be decorative. These lines cannot be considered as spokes, for neither they converge at a hub/central point nor do the distances between them tend to narrow down towards any end.'⁸

On the contrary to these views, B.B.Lal writes - 'The painted lines do converge at the central hub, and thus leave no doubt whatsoever about their representing the spokes of the wheel.'⁹



Fig.3 : Rakhigarhi : Terracotta wheel.Mature Harappan

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8. R.S. Sharma, *Advent of the Aryans in India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi0, 1999, p.18-19
 9. B.B. Lala, *The Saraswati Flows On*, p.73

In order to determine the true character of the Indus valley people their civilization, it would be useful to study the data furnished by it in the light of the *Rgveda*, which represents the ancient culture of the 'Saptasindhu' region. Some of the motifs can be compared to some ideas of the *Rgveda* and correlated to a coherent ideology of life.

One may see, a three-headed figure represented on a seal of Indus valley civilization.



Fig. 4: Mohenjo-daro Pashupati Seal. MatureHarappan

Marshall identifies this figure with Siva.¹⁰ This view supported that *Mahābhārat* traces some epithets for Śiva. These are *triśīrṣa*, *trivaktrg yogādyakṣa*, *ūrdhvalinga*, *Sārdūlarūpa*, *Paśupati*, *triśūla* etc.

T.N. Ramacadran holds that deity has a composite figure consisting of hawk, buffalo and axe. And, in support of this view, he cities the *Rgveda*, where Soma is described as follows; "Brahma

10. John Marshall, *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Valley Civilisation*, Vol. 1 Plate XII-17; London, 1931

among gods, a leader of poets, a *Rṣi* among sages, a buffalo among animals, a hawk among vultures, an axe among weapons, over the sieve goes Soma with a roar"¹¹

P.R. Deshmukh is of the opinion that the god on this seal, represents the three-headed six eyed god described in the *Rgveda* as below :

'Lord of the dwelling, he subdued the demon, who roared aloud, six-eyed and triple-headed. *Tṛta*, made stronger by the might he lent him, struck down the boar with shaft, whose point was iron.'¹²

The three-headed god, called Dāsa here, is described as the son of Tvaṣṭṛ¹³ in the *Rgveda*, also in the *Rgveda*, the three headed son of Tvaṣṭṛ is named as Viśvarūpa. Tvṣṭṛ is the creator of the universe. He is the 'maker of fair things'; the creator of Agni. The three forces of mind (*manas*) life (*prāṇa*) and matter (*vāk*) constituting, the architectonics of creation are his three heads.

Besides the three heads, the figure of the god is shown to be having a pair of horns. In the *Rgveda*, I-33-12, the chief Śuṣṇa is called Śṛṅgin (horned). The horns in question are apparently of the

11. T.N. Ramachandran, Presidential Address to Section I of the Indian History Congress, Nineteenth Session, Agra, 1956, p.7.

ब्रह्मा देवानां पदवीः कवीनां त्रैषिर्विप्राणां महिषो मृगाणाम् ।

श्येनु गृथाणां स्वदितिर्वनानां सोमः पवित्रमत्येति रेभन् ।

12. P.R. Deshmukh, *The Indus Civilisation in the Rgveda*, p. 41

स इद्वासं तुवीरं पतिर्दत्ष्लक्षं त्रिशीर्षाणि दमन्यत् ।

अस्य त्रितो न्योजसा वृथानो विपा वराहमयोऽग्रया इन् ॥ *Rv. X-99-6*

13. *Rv. X-8-8*

सपित्र्याण्यमुद्धानि विद्वानिद्रोषित आस्यो अभ्ययुद्यत् ।

त्रिशीर्षाणं सप्तरश्मिं जघन्वान् त्वाष्ट्रस्य चिन्नः सप्तुजे त्रितो गाः ।

भूरिदिन्द्र उदिनक्षन्त मोजोऽवाभिनत् सप्ततिमन्यमानम् ।

त्वाष्ट्रस्य चिद्विश्वरूपस्य गोमामाचक्राणस्त्रीणि शीर्षं परा वाक् ॥

bull, the expression *Vṛṣaśipra* (having the headdress shaped like that of a bull), used in the *Rgveda*, VII-99-4.

The horns of the bull are prominently figures on the Indus seal. In the *Rgveda* the bull symbolises many gods. For instance, (1) Sūrya is represented as a bull supporting the heaven and the earth (X-31-8); (2) the *Vajra* of Indra is called a sharp bull (I-33-13); (3) Indra himself is described as a sharp-horned bellowing bull (X-28-2); (4) Parjanya is compared to the bull roaring other regions (III-55-17); (5) Agni is associated with a bull 'but newly horn' (VII-33-3) ; (6) Rudra is addressed as a tawny bull (III-33-15), etc. In fact, the bull incorporates the fecundity, which is the source of the procreating process of nature, and as such is the emblem of all those deities that represent its various aspects.

Tree-worship is yet another feature that seems to be prevalent during the Harappan times. On a large number of seals we find a deity encased in a tree. Harappan people worshipping the pipal tree, often under the belief that some deity resides in it. In Vedic imagery the Aśvattha or pipal tree is the symbol of cosmic creation. In the *Rgveda* (X-31-7) both heaven and earth said to have been fashioned from the cosmic tree.



Fig. 5 : Mohenjo-daro: Pipal Twing with Five Branches

A familiar figure from the Indus valley is that of a mother-goddess associated with a fertility cult. Terracotta figurines of this goddess are very common from all Indus sites including Mahenjodaro and Harappa. In the Veda this goddess is known as Aditi, Virāj, Vasupatnī, Viśvarūpā, Vaiśvadevī, Vaiśvadhāyā, Kevalī etc. She is the great principle of motherhood identified with universal nature or infinity. She is described as intact (*anarvā*), widely expanded and extensive, belonging to all men and producing heaven and earth, the mistress of the cosmic order (*rta*), principle of boundless and bondless universal nature, the mother as well as the daughter of Dakṣa Prajāpati or the creator in a creative agitation.



Fig. 6 Harappa : Mother Goddess

Thus, it is clear from the above study that there is a fundamental unity in the religious outlook and philosophical conception of the Indus valley culture and the *Rgveda*. The entire conspectus of symbolism is common to them.

At this point it may be worthwhile to examine the relationship between the Harappan civilization and the *Rgveda* from altogether

different angle. The geomorphological, archeological and radiocarbon dating evidences combine to show the Sarasvatī dried up around 2000 B.C. It is noted above that during the R̄gvedic times the Sarasvatī was a highly active river, sometimes even breaking its banks. All this clearly shows that the *R̄gveda* must antedate 2000 B.C. Further, the geographical area covered by the R̄gvedic people, as is clear from the *R̄gveda*, from the term ‘*Saptasindhu*’ region. Thus, the archaeological culture occupied the ‘*Saptasindhu*’ region during the period prior to 2000 B.C. in the Harappan civilization. Thus, the Harappan culture was equalant of the R̄gvedic culture, and it stands out as the prime source of the subsequent Indian culture.

5. Age of the *Rgveda*

It is evident, the *Rgveda* is the most ancient document of the Aryans. It represents a stage of earliest civilization. In respect of the development of language and religion, philosophy etc. still to us the *Rgveda* represents the most ancient chapter in the history of the Aryan history, which however is explained in the previous chapter.

The age of the *Rgveda* has been engaging the attention of Vedic scholars for a pretty long time. Various scholars have tried to tackle this question on different grounds. Thus, some scholars have tackled it on linguistic grounds, others on astronomical grounds and geological grounds. But, however, the chronology of the Rgvedic age still remains a matter of controversy.

According to orthodox view the hymns of the Vedas are a direct revelation from God to seers, and these seers acted as the medium of communication but were in no sense the author of the same.¹ Sāyaṇa also salutes Śiva at the outset of his commentary thus - "I bow down to Maheśvara, the savant of learning, whose breath was the Vedas and from which proceeding the whole universe."² But from a comparative study of numerous *mantras* in the *Rgveda* as well as some passages of the *Nirukta* and *Anukramaṇīs*, there remains little doubt that the hymns of the Vedas were composed by the sages at the different periods of time.³ Having examined these two conflicting

1. ऋषयः मन्त्रदुष्टारः न तु वेदस्य कर्तारः।
न कश्चित् वेदकर्ता वेदस्मर्तचितुर्मुखः॥ *Parāśara Samihitā*, 1-20
2. यस्य निःश्वासितं वेदाः यो वेदेभ्योऽखिलं जगत्।
निर्ममे तमहं वन्दे विद्यातीर्थं महेश्वरम्॥ *Sāyaṇa* on *Rgveda*, Introduction.
3. गोतमो इन्द्राव्यमतक्षत्। *Rv.* I-62-13
इयं गीर्मन्दार्यस्य। *Rv.* I-166-15
ब्रह्माणि जनयन्त विप्राः। *Rv.* VII-22-9
यत् कामः ऋषिर्यस्यां देवतायां अथापत्यमिच्छन् सुतिं प्रयुडक्ते।
तदैवतम् स मन्त्रो भवति। *Yāska, Nirukta*, VIII-1
यस्य वाक्यं स ऋषिः। *Sarvānukramaṇī*-4

statements it may be concluded that the truth underlying the hymn was revealed to the seers who then composed in their own way. These *mantras* are utilised by them in some particular Sacrifices.

In the modern times, the first scholar who attempted to construct a chronology of the Vedic period was Max Muller.⁴ Starting on the basis of the wellknown fact that Buddhism presupposes the existence of the whole Vedic literature, he fixed 600 B.C. as the date about which the *Brāhmaṇa* period ended. Assigning 200 years to the *Brāhmaṇas*, 200 years to the composition of the sacrificial *mantras* and the compilation of the Veda, and 200 years to the earliest hymns of the Veda, he fixed 1200 B.C. as the date of the commencement of the Vedic age.

Later on, he pushed back the date to 1500 B.C. of the Vedic age. Next he dismissed his opinion thus- "We cannot hope to fix a time terminus a quo. Whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000 or 1500 or 2000 or 3000 years, B.C. no power on earth will ever determine."⁵

M. Bloomfield writes - "It is truly humiliating to students of ancient India to have to answer the inevitable question as to the age of Veda with a meek we don't know.....

Anyhow, it must not be beguiled by that kind of conservatism which merely slaves the conscience into thinking that there is a better proof for any later date, such as 1500, or 1200 or 1000 B.C. rather than the earlier date of 2000 B.C. Once more, frankly, we do not know."⁶

4. Maxmuller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 1859

5. Maxmuller , Gifford Lecturers on Physical Religion, London, 1901, p.91

6. M. Bloom field, *The Religion of the Vedas*, p.18

Many scholars supported Max Muller's theory which dated 1500 B.C. on other arguments of a linguistic nature which were bound to be inconclusive.

"From a purely linguistic point of view the *Rgveda* in its present form cannot be dated much earlier than 1000 B.C. The language of the *Rgveda* is certainly no more different from that of the Avestan *Gāthās* than is old English from Old High German and therefore, they must be assigned to approximately the same age."⁷

In this connection Prof. Winternitz has pointed out that "It is impossible to state definite chronological limits within which languages change. Some languages changes very rapidly, others remain more or less unaltered for a long period."⁸

The aid of astronomy has also been taken to fix the chronology of the Vedic period. Both Bala Gangadhar Tilak and H. Jacobi started from astronomical datas found in Vedic literatures and came to the conclusion independent of each other. They say that at the time of the *Brāhmaṇas* the *Kṛttikās* coincided with the vernal equinox but in the Vedic times it is found that vernal equinox was on *Mṛgaśīrāh*. From astronomical calculations it is found that vernal equinox fell on the Pleiades about 2500 B.C. and on the Orion about 4500 B.C. From this Tilak concluded that the Vedic text and *Brāhmaṇas* were collected between 6000 and 2500 B.C.

According to B.G. Tilak the oldest period in the Aryan civilization, which may be called the Aditi or the pre-orion period roughly extends from 6000 to 4000 B.C. In this period "the finished

7. R.C. Majumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p.207

8. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol.I, p.269

hymns do not seem to have been known and half-prose and half-poetic Nivids or sacrificial formule (giving the principle names, epithets, and feat of the deity invoked) were probably in use.

The second period, called the Orion period roughly speaking extended from 4000 B.C. to 2500 B.C. This was the most important periods in the history of the Aryan civilization. In this period a good many *Sūktas* in the *Rgveda* were composed and several legends were either formed anew or developed from the older ones. The Greeks and the Parsis appear to have left their common home during the latter part of this period.⁹

But, H. Jacobi, in his own way, arrives at the conclusion that the Vedic texts were composed about 4500 B.C. and extended to 2500 B.C. He was confirmed by another astronomical consideration. It is found in the *Grhya-sūtras* that the bride and the bridegroom had to sit upon a bull's hide after reaching their new home till the stars were visible. The bride-groom had to point out the polar star (*Dhruva*) to the bride and ask her to be as strong as the star in conjugal fidelity. In 2780 B.C. the star *Dhruva* was near the pole. The wedding hymn of the *Rgveda* (X-85) does not mention this custom. So Jacobi supposes this custom to be post-Vedic. Thus in his opinion the Rgvedic period lies before 2780 B.C.

V.B. Ketkar says that it found in the *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa* (III-4-1-5) that there was an eclipse when the Jupiter covered the *Puṣyā* star which occurred in 4660 B.C. and therefore the Rgvedic period must go before that time.

According to some scholars who base their calculations on the *Purāṇas*, the Bhārata war was fought in the year 1921 B.C. and the

9. Vide, B.G. Tilak, *Orion*, pp.206-208

Vedas were divided and arranged before that time and hence the time of composition of the Vedic hymns does not fit the time given by H. Jabobi or B.G. Tilak.

Dr. A.C. Das proceeding on the basis of geological changes that have taken place they have taken place, says that the time of the Rgvedic hymns dated the *Rgveda* as far back as 25000 B.C.

The evidence of archaeology is very important to proving the antiquity of the Rgvedic period. The Indus-valley civilization is dated by archaeologists, as third millennium B.C.

K.N. Shastri has shown that the Indus valley civilization is Vedic in character. It corresponds to the Middle Vedic period, is represented by the *Atharvaveda* and the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, rather than the early Vedic period, reflected in the *Rgveda*. To quote his words : "A review of the whole problem, as set forth above, tends to point to the inference that the conditions of life, envisaged in the *Atharvaveda*, are very much in accord with those under which people lived in the Indus Valley some five thousand years ago. From this investigation it would appear that the *Rgveda* is much older than the Indus Civilization."¹⁰

In the foregoing pages some equations of the Indus and the Rgvedic culture are shown. Then, in the Rgvedic times the Sarasvatī is said to be highly perennial river. The Rgvedic hymns shows, that the Rgvedic people were associated with the river Sarasvatī. The Vedic literature clearly refers to the drying up of the Sarasvatī (ex. *Pancavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXV-10-16). The geomorphological, archaeological and radiocarbon dating evidences combine to show that Sarasvatī dried up around 2000 B.C. All this clearly show that the *Rgveda* can be dated as prior to 2000 B.C.

10. K. N. Sastri, *New Light on the Indus Valley Civilisation*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1965, p.142

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION (IN RETROSPECT)

The foregoing study of the *Rgveda* in its historical perspective makes it evident that the *Rgveda* is a treasure of multi-dimensional elements which speak of rich heritage of Indian culture. The secular, philosophical, political and other hymns of the *Rgveda* are found to have been the mirror of the history of India.

As an introduction, the *first chapter* in the thesis presents a brief survey of the divisions of Vedic literature such as the *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas*, the *Upaniṣads*. Further, it deals with the main features of six *Vedāṅgās* forming the *Sūtra* section of the Vedic literature.

The *Vedas* as a whole have been recognised as non-human compositions by the traditional scholars. In this respect, the concept of *Apauruṣeya*, is here explained on the basis of valid proofs. Besides, a host of scholars who are otherwise called *Aitihāsikas*, is also found to have traced the historical personalities and other elements to the Vedic sources. In this light, it is indicated, according to the historians the *Vedas* are human compositions relative to place and time. Further, a brief survey of historical compositions in the *Rgveda* is also given here

for the convenient understanding of the Vedic hymns in different perspectives.

The **second chapter** includes many suggestive phases of historical elements. At the outset, the ancient commentators of the *Rgveda* together with the main features of the respective commentaries have been highlighted.

Under the sub-chapter of the **Geo-historical** elements in the *Rgveda*, the thesis unfolds the important aspects of the *Nadi-Stutis* and of some mountains, seas. The *Rgveda* mentions the names of about forty rivers, of which, the most frequently mentioned are the **Sindhu** the river *par excellence*, and the **Sarasvatī**. The largest number of rivers is referred to in the *Nadistuti-Sūkta* of the tenth *mandala*. In the *Rgveda*, the Himālaya and the Mūjavat mountains are frequently mentioned.

Further, this chapter gives suggestive elements of the economic history of the *Rgveda*. The main occupation of the people in the R̥gvedic age was agriculture. Cattle-breeding forms an indispensable part of a farmer's life. The *Rgveda* mentions various articles, and in that time various industries were also developed. Industrial occupations are - carpentry, pottery, textiles, leather industry, metal industry etc. Trade or transport both inland and seaborne was carried on during the R̥gvedic period.

In its critical exposition the **third chapter** places the presentation of *Dāśarājna* war, R̥gvedic tribes, royal kings, *Dānastutis* and the *Ākhyānas*, showing their socio-political and religio-scientific importance during the R̥gvedic age.

The Rgvedic hymns describe the history of the royal kings, like Trasadasyu, Purukutsa, etc, and they are shown bearing the historical importance of that age.

The Rgvedic *mantras* containing basic elements of Astronomy, Mathematics, Agriculture, Geography, Metallurgy etc. are the living proofs to show the contribution of Vedic seers to the ancient scientific field.

The ***fourth chapter*** provides an account of the views of modern scholars eastern as well as western, and they are taken to the touch stone of Rgvedic hymns. Such views lacking the support are untenable. For eg. on the basis of valid authoritative Vedic texts, the kings and other leading personalities had been the inhabitance of the '*Saptasindhu*' region, which however is India itself during Rgvedic period. In this manner the Indian culture during ancient period reflected in the Rgvedic statements inherit rich historical evidences, stultifying the views of modern scholars.

The hymns of the *Rgveda* are explained here to show how the Vedic seers have preserved the important historical facts, like Sindhu(Indus) river civilization, Sarasvati river civilization etc. Even today the truth of the Sarasvati river civilization is being discovered by archealogical survey of India. The comparative study of these two civilizations on the basis of Rgvedic *mantras* and archealogical remains, makes is sufficient to claim that Sarasvati river civilization was more ancient than Sindhu river civilization.

Evaluating the Rgvedic historical facts any researcher might remark that the *Rgveda* is a repository of the multi-dimentional visions

of the Rgvedic seers. In this regard, any traditional Indian scholar would stick to non-human composition to deal with religio-philosophical concepts set by the seers; and such text have nothing to do with any history of the socio-political institutions. On the other hand the modern scholars eastern and western, not following the traditional view, collect new ideas and examine them through the historical lines of ancient India. In this manner, there appears to be uncompromising breech between the traditional and modern approach to the understanding of the *Rgveda*.

But as a matter of fact one need not keep oneself away from the traditional view on the Vedic literature. It is a known fact that during the ancient period the method of imparting the knowledge to one's student was existed through oral means. But, no kind of writing method was prevailed as in the case of western historical evidences. Following this line of thought there would be no impediment in identifying and ascertaining the historical facts reflected in the *Rgveda*. This assertion exhibits the truth that the Vedic seers had penetrating wisdom in all branches of Vedic lore, besides, their proficiency in science of *Brahman*. In this way the Vedic *mantras* are understood in their right sense of purport. The traditional view maintained by Indian scholars does not get vitiated and simultaneously the rich treasure of historical facts becomes more preserved to know that the *Rgveda* is still a living force in the fountain of wisdom of the Indians of the past.

In fine it may be adjudicated that the Rgvedic seers have brought together in one composite form of Vedic lore, the tradition of UNIVERSAL HISTORY.



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